THE NEW FOREST BEAUTIFUL

F. E. STEVENS

The New Forest

Woods & Forests thus
Rail Ways "
Stations "
Coast Guards "
Inns "

Fordingbridge
Godshill
Deadman Hill
Abbey Walk
Hyde
River Avon
Latchmore Brook
Eyeworth
Abbey
Ogdens
Burley
Frithan
Ringwood
Red Roof Wood
Knowle Walk
Ashford Water
Marlpit Lane
Hill
Stony Cr
Ridley Wood
Boldenwood
Burley
Walk
Mark Ash Wood
Sandford
Kingston Great
Eastern Common
Burley Walk
Knight Oak
Holmsley Walk
Grimmerd Wood
Rhinefield
Walk
Hinton Admiral
Brockenhurst
Milton
Boldre
Christchurch
Bay
Lymington
Ibsley Common
Stream
Milford
Jack in the
The

SUP ERAT:
REX: PER ERR
ATVM:
SAGIT

REGIVM: INCITAT: REX: CVRSV:

VENATORES:

The Church of St Mary Romsey.

Here ie Romsey

Here ie Southampton

L. Irving fecit. M.DCCC.XV.

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THE NEW FOREST BEAUTIFUL

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BY

F. E. STEVENS

AUTHOR OF "THE BATTLE-STORY OF THE HAMPSHIRE REGIMENT"

WITH TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS
AND A MAP

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THE NEW FOREST BEAUTIFUL

CHAPTER I

AN OUTLINE OF HISTORY

The Crown and the People—The Laying Out of the Forest —Voltaire's Dictum—Were the Early Chroniclers biased ?

THE New Forest—which lies between Southampton Water and the Christchurch Avon—is a place of impressive contrasts and some contradictions.

In spite of its name it has a documented history of nearly a thousand years. It is, indeed, the only one of the five royal forests of Hampshire—the whole county, practically, was afforested in the days when forests mattered—the date of the origin of which is known. The others, as was the case with most of the forests of England, consisted of those portions of primeval woodland which remained when the early Britons had cleared away the trees in order to build their houses, hamlets and villages.

The New Forest, on the other hand, was consciously laid out by a Monarch who had spacious ideas, coupled with a complete contempt for democratic institutions, and it is still one of the jewels of the British Crown, for nearly the whole of it belongs to the Kings of England.

And yet, although this beautiful forest is in out-

ward seeming the place of all others where peace, contentment and a sense of the unseen verities might naturally be sought, its story is one of constant warfare between the Crown and the people. It is one of the ironies of its story.

Foresters mean something quite distinctive when they speak of "the Crown." When they use that phrase they are not alluding obliquely to the King's Majesty, but to the age-old system of government prevailing in the Forest, which the true Forester is brought up to fight as a matter of instinct, not in any bitterness of spirit. It is part of his heritage. He is proud rather than otherwise that he has the opportunity, in a legal sense, to measure a lance with the Crown, and that a fair chance of winning is his inalienable right.

It is difficult to put this elusive relationship into words, but the preliminary duty of the Forest historian and topographer is to indicate the range of the cheerful conflict which has been going on in this corner of England for centuries without the rest of the world knowing anything about it.

Sometimes it was merely a difference between the historians on points of legal theory; but occasionally the winds blew up a little local tempest which even long departmental delays failed to settle, so that Parliament itself felt compelled to take a hand.

When the Hon. Gerald Lascelles was appointed Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest, over forty years ago, being, as such, the personal resident representative of the Office of Woods and Forests, he had never heard of the "New Forest question," although Parliament had then been dealing with it, at intervals, for the better part of a hundred years.

I have sometimes wondered whether this constant maintenance of a fighting attitude is really the surviving expression of an instinct which was implanted

in the heart of the Forest dweller when his forbears fought the Conqueror for his homeland.

That part of the accepted schoolroom history of England which concerns the New Forest has always insisted that the Conqueror burnt villages and churches and laid the south-west of Hampshire waste in the interests of sport. But there is at least a doubt about it. Gilpin, the leading authority, suggests that systematically to lay so great an area waste was beyond the first William's resources. Voltaire took a hand in the argument, putting the theory forward that so prudent a King would never have countenanced such an act, seeing that trees which would take years to grow would thus have been made to replace cultivated land.

Lappenberg, on the other hand, says that the Conqueror " mercilessly caused villages and churches to be burnt down within its circuit," and some other historians put the number of destroyed churches at sixty.

Wise has analysed the evidence with care. His general conclusion seems to be that the early chroniclers were biased, and that in those details in which they differ from the Domesday record the weight of evidence is against them. They are definite enough in their charges, but some of them may have been copyists and others may have accepted as evidence that which would not really bear analysis. Wise points out that there are churches with Norman features still remaining within the Forest : that there are no ruins to be found of the churches said to have been destroyed : that other churches were built soon after the afforestation : also that the quality of the soil was such that it could never have supported a population requiring so many places of worship.

The best summing up seems to be that the charge of wanton destruction in the interests of sport is " not proven."

CHAPTER II

FOREST LAW

Other Royal Forests of Hampshire—Early Forest Law—The Assize of the Forest—"A Horde of Officials"—The Chief Forester—"Nothing but their Eyes to weep with."

IT has been said that Norman Hampshire contained more forests than the whole of the remainder of England. Freemantle Forest lay on the Berkshire border; to the east were the Forests of Woolmer and Alice Holt; southward, stretching across the Meon and Hamble valleys right to the east bank of Southampton Water, was the Forest of Bere, little bits of which remain, and West Bere and Buckholt lay in the upper valleys of the Test and the Itchen. All these were royal hunting grounds—beech forests on the high ground, firs on the sandy loam, as at Woolmer, and oak and beech on the lowlands.

Of these early forests patches remain here and there, and there are still two Crown forests in the county in addition to the New Forest—Alice Holt and Woolmer.

For this county of forests a special legal code was designed—Forest law—and it may very well be that the stern and repressive character of this system helped the early chroniclers to their conclusion that the King who enacted such laws would have had no compunction in preparing the ground by the merciless wasting and burning of which he was accused.

The Assize of the Forest was, let it be remembered,

the enactment of a King, who was in fact, as well as in name, a Conqueror.

The " New " Foresters, and, indeed, those who dwelt in the other royal domains, were bitterly hostile to the King and the demands of hunting. Forest dwellers were forbidden to possess even the implements of the chase ; the cutting of wood was punishable ; feeding rights were practically non-existent, and there was a body of unwritten law which laid upon the people, barons as well as the democracy, the duty under heavy penalty of maintaining kingly rights and the general good of hunting, and in order that the clergy should keep the people in a properly submissive frame of mind in these matters, the threat of reprisal was kept ever before their eyes.

Pope thus summarized the public attitude towards Forest law :

> Proud Nimrod first the bloody chase began,
> A mighty hunter and his prey was man.
> Our haughty Norman boasts that barbarous name,
> And makes his trembling slaves the royal game.
> The fields are ravished from industrious swains,
> From men their cities and from God their fanes.

Such a system implied the existence of what in the modern world is called a " horde of officials," of whom the Chief Forester was the ruler. He was always the Judge, and as regularly counsel for the prosecution, and there was a system, under Forest law, that when he held what was euphemistically called a Court of Inquiry, even Bishops, specially summoned, were compelled, under threat of severe punishment, to attend.

It may have been that the system was consciously designed by a King drunk with victory to leave the people " nothing but their eyes to weep with."

CHAPTER III

THE FOREST KEEPERS

The Lords Warden—Royal Princes as Forest Keepers—Lodges which became Famous Homes—Widespread Pluralities—The Verderers—The Oldest Court in England.

THE Barons at Runnymede were able to ease the burden, but probably only in respect of penalties. Those who were set in office under the Chief Forester to ensure the due performance of the Assize of the Forest naturally came in time to regard their offices as sinecure posts. There were many keepers who exercised suzerainty over the walks or bailiwicks into which the Forest was divided. Their early functions were mildly magisterial, but in time they ceased to be anything more than nominal. There were cases in the fairly modern history of the Forest in which keeperships were held by Princes and members of the nobility. There were comfortable salaries attaching to these posts, and attractive lodges. Malwood Lodge, where Sir William Harcourt lived later, grew out of one of them; Lord Darling lived at another—Lady Cross; and Bramble Hill, rebuilt by the late Sir William Mather, was a third. But the keepers' duties were performed in the days of widespread pluralities by working keepers.

The keeperships were in the gift of the Lords Warden of the Forest, the successors in line of the Chief Forester. Like other wardenships, this became in time a

salary without a job, and its last holder was the Duke of Cambridge. But before the Lords Warden system was established, control was, as it were, placed in commission, by the establishment in the reign of Henry VIII of a Court of Augmentations.

In the days of his effective rule—long before the Office of Woods took over the Royal Forests as a matter of State business—the Lords Warden were responsible for the woodlands which earned the revenues of the Forest. Of course there was an elaborate system of perquisites which resulted in all the minor posts being much sought after. Thus there were the woodwards, especially charged with the care of the trees; the men who cared for the deer; the representatives of the Navy, whose duty it was to select the trees required as timber for the building of men-o'-war.

More important than any in the light of legal theory, but having administrative and not executive functions, were the Verderers, a judicial body which, reformed by Parliament, but tracing its history into the mists of juridical antiquity, was intended to hold the scales between Crown interests and those of the Forest dwellers who claimed common rights.

There were Verderers in the New Forest in the days of Canute (when the name of the Forest area was Ytene), and their earlier functions were to safeguard the interests of the King. But their duties have been reversed as it were, and they now exist as the representatives of the Commoners. They are selected by the Commoners now, but before the last arrangement of relationships in the Forest—the Act of 1877—they were chosen by the Freeholders of the County.

The Court of Verderers, headed by the official Verderer representing Crown interests, still sits to deal with breaches of Forest law, just as it did in the year 1016, the date of its establishment. Then they

numbered four, all freeholders, and were called Verderers because it was their primary duty to guard the vert or trees. They were paid officers in these very early days, their fees being two horses, a sword, five lances, a shield, and twenty shillings yearly. They were chosen by the King's writ, directed to the Sheriff, and it was a condition of their office, in days long anterior to popular election, that they could only be discharged from office by the writ of the Sovereign.

Theirs was the duty in those early times to try all cases in which the hand of the Foresters had been unlawfully raised either against the trees of the Forest or the wild beasts thereof; in other words, the vert and the venison. But that view of their duties ceased to prevail in the early fourteenth century, when it was laid down that the Verderers' task was very definitely to guard the rights of the King. They were King's men. To trace the story of the Verderers' task through the long years, however, is a fit task for the jurist. It changed frequently, according to the changing needs of the times, but at length it was recognized that their function was to hold the scales more or less evenly between the Crown and the Commoners. Sometimes, according to the constitution of the Court, the Verderers favoured the King; sometimes the direct representatives of the Crown found it difficult to get a hearing at all; occasionally, though this was not often, they failed to exert any influence whatever upon Forest politics.

There were three Forest courts: the Court of Attachment or Woodmote, which was, in effect, a court of record; the Court of Swainmote, where offenders were tried; and the Court of Chief Justice in Eyre, or Justice Seat, where judgment was finally given. The latter part of the arrangement—it was the most curious juridical body in the English system—has disappeared,

Mr. Thomas Grenville, who died in 1847, being the last holder.

The present duties of the Verderers, laid down precisely in the Act of 1877, which has been described as "the Charter of the Forest," may thus be summarized: To see that no more than sixteen thousand acres of Crown land are enclosed at one time; to maintain generally the character of the Forest; to preserve the ornamental woods, and to provide the necessary wood for satisfying those fuel-rights which remain; to dismiss and appoint all Forest servants; to levy the necessary rates, and to inquire into all unlawful enclosures, purprestures, encroachments and trespasses. Just before the settlement the Verderers had, without deserving it, been at the very centre of the storm which had been raging for so long. But thereafter their position was quite clearly defined. They were elected on the common franchise, and it has been counted the highest honour which can fall to the Forester that he should be appointed a member of this historic Court.

It is said that the only office within the Constitution which has a greater antiquity is that of Coroner.

wrested tyranny from royal hands, proceeded to set up something very little better in its place. "And thus," as Gilpin says in his lyrical way, "a thousand tyrants started up instead of one."

So it happened that when the titular head of the Forest was the Lord Warden, his function was hardly that of the Chief Forester. His general duty was to preserve the Forest, but this work in its technical sense was performed by deputy, officers who understood game and woods respectively. Lords Warden were appointed by the King under letters patent, and King's House at Lyndhurst was part of their reward as well as an allowance for repairs.

The post soon became a sinecure comparable to that of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. It never appears to have been bestowed for political services, but was quite often held by Princes of the Blood Royal. In Gilpin's day the Lord Warden was the Duke of Gloucester. Frederick Duke of York was another, and a Duke of Bedford once held the post. When the Duke of Cambridge yielded up office, no further appointment was made, and complete control was given to the Office of Woods, the Deputy Surveyor becoming the Crown's chief representative.

There were numerous other posts, some ceremonial and some concerned definitely with the care of the Forest. Of the first order the Lieutenant, whose duty it was to ride before the King when he came to the Forest, was the chief, and there was also the Bow-bearer, who disappeared quite early in Forest history. The Rangers carried out duties which later passed to the Keepers.

But for a long time also the keeperships were held by people who did no "keeping." These, too, were sinecure posts, valued, apart from the salary, because they carried with them very charmingly situated lodges, and, presumably, some sporting opportunities.

Prince William of Gloucester, the Duke of Richmond, the Duke of Bolton, and Lord de la Warr, were among the " Keepers."

The latter's walk or bailiwick was Boldrewood, to which, during his occupancy at least, Eyeworth was joined. He lived at Boldrewood Lodge, one of several beautiful Forest Lodges. One of his successors, the Earl of Londonderry, also lived there while Master Keeper, but on the death of his widow the house was pulled down.

The Dukes of Bolton, in whom for some time at least Master Keeperships were hereditary, lived in quite considerable state at Burley Lodge (Burley and Holmesley were within the ducal bailiwick) and exercised a sway within his area which seemed on occasion to override all Sovereign rights. So firmly entrenched were the Paulets (of which family the Dukes of Bolton were the head) that their forestal rights, and more particularly, perhaps, their interests in the great lodge at Burley, were only extinguished by purchase by the Crown. That great house, too, has disappeared.

Prince Frederick William, Master Keeper, was living by right of office at the Ironshill Lodge in 1787, and Colonel Nathaniel Heywood, in charge of Rhinefield and Wilverley Walks, and also deputy to the Lord Warden, lived at Rhinefield.

The Groom Keepers in the early days were the real guardians of the Forest. Theirs was the duty of caring for the deer; of guarding them against the instincts of a people who regarded venison as their natural food. Especially had they to see that the winter keep of the deer was provided where it was easily accessible to them.

The Woodwards were, under the old and long departed regime, especially charged with the care of the woods. In early times, also, there were the Regarders, exercising police functions of sorts, and having re-

sponsibility also for the assignment of fuel wood to those who by long-established custom had rights in this respect.

Some of these posts passed from father to son for generations, and in very numerous cases provision was made for their holders to receive in addition to a kind of retaining fee special pay while actually engaged.

One of these was the official, unconnected with Forest administration, who, in Stuart times, represented naval interests in the Forests, choosing the timber which was required for naval purposes. He was called the Purveyor, although he was not very happily named.

At one time it was for its production of timber that the Forest was chiefly valued by the Crown. In 1608 " good oak timber " to the extent of 315,000 loads was taken for the building of ships of war ; but the pace was not, could not be, maintained, and by 1783 there were only 20,000 loads available. It was because of the alarm that this circumstance caused that fresh enclosure rights were granted by Parliament to King William III, who was a good Forester according to his lights.

Perquisites, which once stood in the way of good government in the Forest, have ceased to-day, but in the aforetime all sorts of people, other than those who held sinecure posts, battened on the Forest.

Thus the Bow-bearer, whose very name carries us back to the dawn of the Forest's story as a royal demesne, received a buck and a doe yearly ; the Rangers, of later date, had the same, and fuel wood (or money equivalent) in addition.

James I gave " morefalls " or windfalls by grant—in one case for twenty-one years, Richard Kilborne and Thomas Tilsby being the holders. Charles II had an amiable habit of paying some of his debts with grants

of timber, 2,000 decayed trees being the subject of one grant, though whose was the opinion upon the point of decay the records do not show. A patch of woodland was also granted by the same Monarch to a Maid of Honour of the Court, which hints, at least, at a romance of some sort.

Grants of land for services rendered were not infrequent. Thus in the reign of Edward III Richard Spelman held land for the service of finding an esquire to attend the King, litter for the royal bed, and hay for the King's horses.

When times were bad and the pay of Keepers fell into arrear by reason of the forgetfulness of the Exchequer, it was not in the least unusual for these officers to take their pay in kind, and, maybe, when in better times wages in coin of the realm was paid to them, the habit of having timber, too, established itself. One does not know, but everybody in the Forest in remote times, apparently, looked to the Forest to maintain them.

The under-Keepers' perquisites included deer and browse wood. Browse was the material collected for the food of deer when pasturage was lacking, and it was placed close to the Keepers' lodges. Rabbits were perquisites, and the Keepers had, or assumed, the right to keep swine on the Forest. The Master Keepers had buck for their ducal tables ; the Woodward had, as of right, the bark from the trees from which the timber for the repair of Crown property was taken, and the Verderers had an ancient right of taking buck on their way to the Court, although this was commuted later to one buck and one doe annually.

Fuel wood was distributed with a generous hand. Lord de la Warr received twenty-five loads annually, and no doubt the other nominal Keepers did the same ; and since Gilpin had by virtue of holding the living of Boldre an annual grant of twelve loads, it may be

assumed that others than the holders of forestal office shared in the distribution.

During all the early years encroachments were common. Many picturesque houses were built on land fenced without authority, and even as late as the latter part of the eighteenth century there were encroachments and depredations of every sort. "The Forest," says Wise, "was being robbed under every pretext."

CHAPTER V

THE GREAT SURVEY

Peace for Half a Century—Travel in the Forest was a Great Adventure—A National Deer Park—Deer Removal Scheme—The Lords Inquiry—A Gesture of Despair—The Petition from the Forest.

THE Kings of England varied curiously in the way in which they regarded the Forest. To the earlier of them it was but a hunting ground. But they were not all sportsmen ; the chase, the sport of Kings, was the enthusiasm of only some of them. A great many forgot all about the Forest ; others looked upon it as a source of revenue and some quite useful patronage. The Stuart Kings were not unmindful of the importance of New Forest oak for naval construction, and William III was almost an enthusiast in this respect, recognizing, moreover, that enclosure and preservation was as important as cutting down.

The earlier Georgian Kings showed no particular interest, and it was a natural consequence that those who lived within the perambulation of the Forest developed its resources as they chose. Nominally they were charged with preservation and custodianship, and in theory their interests would be opposed to those of the Commoners. In practice, in those days during which the Forest was a self-contained area, having but a slender association with the outside world, the Commoners also did pretty much as

they liked, but there was always some antagonism, and out of this at long last grew the great Survey and the appointment of a Royal Commission of 1788–9.

The Survey was complete, and it defined the Forest area with precision for the first time for a good many years. The total area was found to be 92,362 acres, of which 63,845 acres were in the actual possession of the Crown. The rest comprised freeholds within the Forest, the land about the lodges, and a certain area was actually defined as encroachment.

It was in the report of the Commission, upon which the legislation of what may be called the modern period was founded, that complaint was made of the range of the system of perquisites, and of the evil which followed in its train, and in particular of the habit of those in whose hands custodianship was placed of permitting the breeding of rabbits for profit and the feeding of swine on the Forest. The result of the cultivation, so to speak, of the rabbit population was that there was great destruction of seedlings and young wood.

In the same report was reference to the great increase in the deer—so great was the overstocking that many died of want—and of the harmful habit of cutting browsing extravagantly. It was a comprehensive document, designed to restore the Forest as a national possession, but paying due attention to the necessity that it should earn such revenues as it was capable of yielding, and that it should be regarded as a vital source of the material of naval defence. The Act of 1800 was framed in this sense.

It eased the New Forest question for the better part of half a century ; that is to say, nothing was heard about it outside. The Crown, through the responsible department, enclosed according to the Act, and care was taken of the deer. Nobody came into the Forest for pleasure from without, because travel was difficult

and of roads there were none save the rough tracks between the villages and those cut by hard usage in the transport of timber.

Moreover, although the New Forest never possessed a Robin Hood, travel through its woodlands was regarded as an adventure likely to be accompanied by considerable peril. In early Victorian times, indeed, the nomadic population preying upon those who dwelt within the Forest marches was very considerable and constituted a part at least of the Commoners' recurring grievance.

In a word, the Forest became a great national deer-park, and had scarcely any other function, for naval requisitions were decreasing. Other of the Forest industries were decaying too, chiefly because of the passing of the centre of industrial and shipbuilding gravity to the North.

The increase in the deer became, indeed, a very considerable nuisance. Their depredations upon the resources of the Foresters, quite apart from the fact that they left little pasturage for the stock of those owning common rights, were so great that Parliament was again compelled to realize its responsibility.

An inquiry was ordered, and one of the recommendations was that the deer should be removed, and that the Crown should be compensated for this loss, if loss it could be said to be, by being allowed to extend the area of enclosure. The figure at which this extra enclosure was first set was 140,000 acres, but the Commoners, who had by this time fully demonstrated their right to be heard, resisted this strongly, so that a compromise at 10,000 acres was arranged.

Peace descended upon the Forest once again, although outwardly it had never been disturbed; but the settlement had singularly little of permanence about it. The pasturage had suffered because the deer were so numerous; in a very few years it began

to suffer because they were so few. They had at least kept down the rough herbage, and had in other ways improved the feed. In their absence the undergrowth thickened, and the holly scrub stretched out its encroaching fingers into the green rides.

The Commoners also complained that the department was developing a certain tendency to enclose what they had always regarded as free and open land. Parliament was once more appealed to, and it is not improbable that Parliament was feeling just a little impatient with a body which, having rights which were those alone of custom and usage, should ask for a particular boon and then grumble because it was given. However, the whole question was referred to a Committee of the House of Lords, which was required to look into the matter judicially and find, if such were possible, a final solution.

The problem seemed to this Committee to be beyond a settlement which would satisfy anybody for long, and the decision may be regarded either as a gesture of despair or an attempt to provoke Parliament into action which would at least be conclusive. What they suggested was that the whole area should be deforested, and the land divided up between the Crown and the Commoners.

The proposal was one which found some friends within the Forest, but the Commoners as a whole were opposed to it. A Bill was actually introduced into the Commons somewhat on these lines, but it got no farther than the printers. In this plan there was provision for the reservation of several hundred acres in the neighbourhood of Rufus Stone which was to be dedicated to the public, and the rest was to be cut up between the Crown and those possessing Forest rights.

But the public as a whole showed alarm, and the interesting theory was held by the Hon. Gerald

Lascelles, who spent thirty-five years in the Forest as Deputy Surveyor, and did more for its scientific preservation than anybody had ever done before, that it was the æsthetic movement dating from the great Exhibition of 1851 which stirred the general public to enthusiasm. There was the circumstance, also, that the railway now ran through the Forest, and that large numbers of people who knew no more about it than that it was the place where the Red King had met his death, were learning something of its beauty and gaining some knowledge of the fact that they, too, had some rights even if nobody had ever troubled to define them.

At all events, the House of Commons decided, by resolution in 1870, that nothing of a decisive character should be done until a full inquiry had been held, and that in the meantime there should be no further enclosing or planting.

Lord Henry Scott, M.P. (afterwards the first Lord Montagu of Beaulieu), at that time represented South Hants, which included the New Forest, and he pleaded strongly that the inquiry should go to the root of things; that there should be a clear definition of the rights of the Crown, the Commoners, and the public.

For the first time Forest opinion was organized. Lord Henry Scott started a movement at Lyndhurst in 1875 which aimed at presenting Forest opinion in detail at the inquiry, and those who were interested included Mr. Cowper Temple, M.P., who lived at Broadlands, on the Forest's edge; Sir Henry Paulet, who lived at Little Testwood; Mr. Esdaile, of Burley; Mr. Francis Compton, of Minstead Manor; and Mr. Briscoe Eyre, whose home was at Bramshaw.

The complaint formulated was that the Deer Removal Act was oppressive in its workings; that the system of making enclosures in contiguous blocks, closing up long stretches of Forest, was injurious to

the interests of all concerned in regard to their right of passage; that the removal of the fine old beech trees for purely utilitarian purposes was unnecessary; and that the enclosures, when finally opened, were practically valueless from the point of view of pasturage. These complaints were embodied in a petition to the House of Commons containing sixteen clauses, which was presented to the House by Lord Henry Scott, who also moved for the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate the position. Mr. Cowper Temple supported him in this matter also, and a Committee was appointed. It sat for some time, and finally published a report, the main recommendation being that the Forest should remain open and unenclosed, except to the extent to which it was expedient to maintain the existing right of the Crown to plant trees. It was also laid down that the ancient ornamental woods and trees should be preserved, and that the general character of the scenery should be maintained. The right of the Crown to enclose land on occasion and under certain defined conditions was reaffirmed, and the Court of Verderers was ordered to be reconstituted in order to protect the Commoners' rights and to have the power to appoint officers to deal with matters of encroachment.

The net results, as Mr. Lascelles said in his fascinating book on his life in the Forest, was that the extensive powers for planting for the sake of perpetuating and increasing the national stock of timber . . . were altogether surrendered. Not an acre beyond what had already been dealt with was ever to be taken in and planted, and of the land already taken in (some 17,600 acres) only 16,000 were ever to be enclosed at one time.

CHAPTER VI

THE CENTRAL FOREST

The Boundary Lines—The Pageant of the Road—The Commerce of Pleasure—Curiosities of the Highways—A Special Act of Parliament.

THE arrangement which it is proposed to follow in this survey of the Forest is not arbitrary.

It will be planned in such a way that the seeker after a special beauty or a site of particular historical interest will be able to learn all that matters about it quite rapidly. No attempt either has been made to keep within the strict statutory limits of the Forest, because there is so much that is of interest just without its actual borders.

"The Forest," in the sense in which it occupies the mind of the Forester, is not just the afforested area as finally defined by the legislation of the last century, but also the little groups of villages on its borders, and the small towns which have, in fact, always stood outside but which have close community of interest.

Thus Romsey on the north and Lymington and Christchurch on the south are all within the Parliamentary area of the New Forest, and Christchurch, well away from its south-western boundary, is at present the head-quarters of the Parliamentary Division.

But it would be convenient, perhaps, roughly to trace the Forest area strictly, regarding, say, Mark Ash, the famous beechwood, as its centre of gravity.

Lyndhurst-road, the point of entry for seventy-five per cent. of Forest visitors, coming either by road or rail, is on the north-eastern boundary. In a north-western direction the line runs thence to Nomansland and Bramshaw Telegraph, the great table-land of the Forest, and then to Godshill.

The western boundary is roughly parallel to the Avon, all the towns and villages upon that river—Fordingbridge, Ibsley and Ringwood—being technically just outside.

As the line turns it runs practically parallel to the Solent, with Bransgore, Hinton Admiral and Wootton, half in and half out, as it were, and including Boldre, and at one point nearly reaching the coast. Thereafter the line follows Southampton Water in a general kind of way, but does not actually reach it. Even Fawley, essentially a Forest village, is outside. From a point near Hythe, also just outside, the line proceeds north-westerly to Lyndhurst-road again.

The railway enters the Forest through the deep woods about Deerleap, crosses the heathland between Beaulieu and Brockenhurst, passes between the magnificent woodlands of Lady Cross and Woodfidley, and then comes out into the open heath again near the southern edge.

There are two great turnpike roads, one entering the Forest at Lyndhurst-road, and branching at the village, three miles farther on, one branch going between Ramnor and Gritnam Woods to Brockenhurst, and thence across Setley Plain to the sea, and the other passing Mark Ash and Vinney Ridge and reaching the Forest boundary over the other plateau of Markway Hill.

The other main road enters the Forest near Cadnam,

gleaming water have their quieter appeal, and then there is the glory of the hollies.

The pageant of the seasons as seen even from the Forest roads is ever living, ever changing.

The New Forest roads have a story of their own. In the years when the Forest's chief function was the production of timber, the only roads, apart from the trails from village to village, were those used for timber drawing. These had to be maintained according to the prevailing standards for convenience sake, but of other road-making there was none.

There was one other exception. Some of the roads were turnpikes, maintained by turnpike trusts, but when these ceased they fell away again into tracks. The Forest was not affected by the early highway legislation, which threw the responsibility for road maintenance upon the local authorities, and the consequence was that it was nobody's business to do anything in this direction. The Crown concerned itself to the extent of keeping up the roads required for timber working, generally useless to the public, and as the Forest in Mid-Victorian times was not rated, there was no money for the purpose.

In one of the measures of poor-law legislation, as Mr. Lascelles has pointed out in his book, provision was made for dealing with extra parochial areas like the Forest, by forming townships, the dwellers within which should make some contribution towards highway costs. Denny Lodge township, which many strangers believe to indicate the name of a place rather larger than a village, perhaps received its name, only used for official purposes, in this way, although there is no part of the Forest with fewer habitations than this "township."

In fact the plan came to nothing at all, partly because of local opposition. As a consequence, although highway traffic was increasing, nothing was done

within the Forest until, indeed, many roads were impassable.

Wherefore a special Act of Parliament was put forward in 1883, under which the Crown undertook to put the roads into decent order, and it was provided that the Highway Boards which then existed, should maintain them thereafter.

As a matter of fact a considerable development in local Government, in which Parliament was tardily manifesting an interest, was at that moment taking place. The County Councils came into being, and in Hampshire the new body developed a special enthusiasm for road maintenance and immediately took over the main roads.

Lyndhurst, though not the geographical centre of the Forest, is its natural centre for every sort of purpose.

All about it are the glorious woodlands, the mighty beeches, the sturdiest of the oaks, the thickest enclosures and even the nastiest bogs. Close at hand are some of the earliest enclosures, and trees which are famous enough to have names known everywhere, like the Knightwood Oak and the Queen Beech. Knightwood Oak in the enclosure of the same name is a very giant, and it is, perhaps, still growing in girth. Wise's measurement of its circumference at 4 feet from the ground was 17 feet 4 inches ; a more recent one (Wise's was that of 1862) puts the figure at over 21 feet.

CHAPTER VII

ROUND ABOUT LYNDHURST

Lyndhurst—Mark Ash—The gloomy Majesty of the fallen Beeches—An awkward Bottle Neck—King's House—The Verderers Hall—The Church and the Leighton Fresco—The stately Homes of the Central Forest—The Bogs—Royal Visits.

MARK ASH is a kind of lodestar to the average visitor to the Forest, possibly by reason of its name, which falls romantically on the ear. The great beech woods seem immemorially old, and it is not in the least unlikely that the name itself has a Norman or pre-Norman origin, though the probability is that these woods were planted by the hand of man. The authorities, however, cannot agree concerning the date.

Beneath the great beeches—one of them has an 18 foot girth—the holly and the thorn flourishes. The wood is dim and cloistral in spring and summer, and ineffably quiet, for the birds gather there very little. It is a saddening place indeed, for the great beeches have crashed everywhere within these last few years—generally at night, it has been noticed, and lie in the gloomy majesty of upreared roots. There are dozens of these fallen giants, gaunt and black, with the undergrowth gradually covering their unlovely lines. But still a kind of regeneration goes on. There are young beeches thrusting heavenwards in Mark Ash, pushing through the straggling hollies and thorns, and in spring

there are seedlings by the countless thousands: the earth is carpeted with their tender shoots as thickly as in autumn lies the russet of the fallen leaves.

The suggestion has been lately made that Mark Ash should be replanted, for to some eyes the sight of the fallen giants of what has been described as the most beautiful wood in Europe, gives acute pain, but there are many who hold that man is incapable of improving upon Nature in these great recuperative processes. It was the Hon. Auberon Herbert who said perhaps with wisdom: "The only thing to do with the Forest is to leave it alone." Mark Ash lies but a few miles from Lyndhurst on what everybody in southern Hampshire knows as the Bournemouth-road, and if there is a more popular place with the pleasure-seeker it is only Rufus Stone.

Lyndhurst (Linhest in Domesday) itself is now a brisk and bustling village, exceedingly inconvenient from the point of view of modern motor traffic, because it has a bottle neck, and that, just at the top of a sharp little rise in the main street. Since most of the Forest traffic centres here, the main street with its double line of shops has a very urban appearance, although it is only necessary to walk a few hundred yards to reach the quiet woods.

The suggestion has been made once or twice that traffic needs might be suitably met by a by-pass road behind the village, joining the great highway to the sea at the other end, but it is not in the least likely to be made. The Crown would not agree to the cutting of another road, and even if authority were willing, there is a sufficiently well-developed commercial instinct in the place to raise the strongest objection to allowing trade thus to pass away.

Historically the most important feature of Lyndhurst is the King's House (Lyndhurst, remember, is a Royal Manor), once the residence of the Lord Warden,

and still, in the minds of the people, the dwelling-place of forestal authority. The house itself, flat-fronted and close to the road, and having a pleasant garden of seven acres behind, is now in private occupation, but the Verderers Hall adjoins it and is, indeed, part of it. Above the Hall at one time were some beautiful Tudor rooms, which were thrown into the hall, and the oak panelling around the hall is said to have come from these upper apartments. An ancient picture which was saved during alterations in the last century, which were otherwise somewhat destructive, shows the holding of the great Justice Seat in Eyre, which took place in 1809.

The house itself is of sixteenth-century date, but the Verderers Hall was built, so it is commonly held, in the fourteenth century. Upon the Hall wall hangs an implement which was said to be the stirrup of the Red King, but few of the authorities believe that it is of earlier than sixteenth-century date.

The Hall is still used by the Court of Verderers, which retains some of its ancient forms and ceremonies, though reformed under circumstances already explained, under the presidency of the Official Verderer, a Crown nominee. It is also used as a police court, though a little incongruously, having regard to the stirrup mentioned and the antlered heads.

The Church, a landmark for the whole of this part of the Forest as it stands at the top of a knoll, has as its most interesting feature the wall-painting of the wise and foolish virgins painted by Lord Leighton, P.R.A., during a series of Forest holidays.

The work was in a way experimental, the theory existing at that time, that wall-paintings could not be given permanence in this climate. The Leighton picture, painted on a wall surface scientifically hardened beforehand, showed that wall-paintings could and do live in England. The figures, fifteen

or more, are life size, and the whole picture occupies a space twenty-four feet by eight feet. A critic, Mr. Beavington Atkinson, writing soon after the completion of the picture, said :

" The whole action—Christ in the character of the Bridegroom occupying the centre of the position—is brought into measured symmetry ; the drama is played out within geometrical spaces ; the component parts are nicely balanced, smoothly rounded, unbroken by angularity or discord ; indeed the whole performance has a harmony little short of musical."

Wise, who saw the work in its early stages, said of it about 1860, " that the richness of its colour," when the subject was unidentifiable, " can even now be seen beneath the strong white light which pours from the East window."

There is a story of the bells at Lyndhurst Church over which those who bore a part in it still chuckle, forty or fifty years ago though it occurred. When the Church was built it had but three bells in its tower, but as the result of a subsequent gift or bequest three others were added, and with this still rather limited peal a band of ringers of higher skill than the average made frequent and acceptable music. One winter when the ringers had completed the ringing out of the old year and had ushered in the new with befitting ceremonial, they came down the stairs in a body, blowing out the candles which were placed at intervals to light them as they came.

At the stair foot, with the last candle extinguished, they saw a ghostly figure, enwrapped in white and carrying what appeared to be a horn lantern, enter by the door, and with noiseless footsteps walk across the church. Every man of them turned and raced up the dark stairway of the bell-turret again, nor stopped till they were in the bell-chamber.

The ringer who told me this story quite lately, says

he can still remember the uncanny raising of his hair at the appearance of the apparition. After a while, with fresh lights, and gaining courage from the fact that the ghostly visitor did not appear to have any particular designs upon them, the badly scared ringers decided to make another attempt to reach the door and home.

When they arrived on the Church floor again the figure in white began to approach them, but apparently thinking better of it, turned and went out of the door again. There was not a man in that little company on that New Year's day who was not prepared to swear that he had seen a ghost, yet after a moment, they followed it out into the Churchyard.

As they reached the open air the figure had passed down the Church path, and was about to enter the gateway at King's House (it was Queen's House then). They followed at a distance, but when they heard the click of the gate as it closed after the figure in white raiment they decided that there was a material explanation for their experience. But they did not investigate further, and probably agreed not to mention their incident until they had a better excuse to offer than that which would assuredly be accepted as the true one, namely, that they had been celebrating the coming of the New Year in other ways than by an exercise upon the bells.

But there was an explanation which was almost prosaic. The " ghost " was the Deputy-Surveyor of that day, living then at the old royal lodge. He had, it was presumed, forgotten that the hour was one which required to be celebrated, and hearing the bells, had made up his mind to investigate. He had gone to bed by that time, but putting on a light dressing-gown, and picking up a lantern, and perhaps a stick as well, had crossed to the Church. By that time the bells had stopped, but the Deputy-Surveyor heard

footsteps and so remained until somebody should appear who would explain. At the time of the second appearance of the ringers down the stairs, the truth dawned on him and he returned home without explaining his presence in the Church.

There was tremendous hilarity in the village, but it was only that click of the gate which proved to somebody who had not quite lost his wits, that a material personage must have had something to do with it, since an immaterial visitor would not have required to open a gate at all. But for that trivial chance Lyndhurst Church, and King's House too, would assuredly have had an historic ghost as an added attraction. One feels almost sorry that the story was explained. It would have been so much better as it was.

That particular party of ringers were held by many to be over anxious to display their powers in campanology. A humorist of the time circulated these lines, to the joy of many and the slight discomfiture of the ringers :

> How I wish for the quiet and peace of the land.
> That you had round your necks what you hold in your hands.

Perhaps it was that which turned their attention to handbell ringing, at which they won a wide fame throughout the Forest. The late Mr. William Gerrard, a great character in the Forest, and a cabinet-maker of quite amazing skill, was the master of the ringers and the owner of the forty-two bells. He trained the company and turned them into most efficient players. For several years no festivity was complete without them. They were required at weddings and at revels of every other kind. Indeed, when Forest hosts wished to make their house parties notable they often engaged the ringers to play in the

hall during dinner and to give a " show " afterwards.

The " ring leader," if he may be so called, had a brother who had at one time an even wider fame. He was the handy man of the village, expert at everything to which he turned his attention. As an entomologist he was known to all the experts, but those who held him in high regard in this respect were not Foresters. To Lyndhurst folk his fame rested on the fact that he not only acted as his own cook and housemaid, but that he was his own tailor as well.

Among the interesting and beautiful houses close to Lyndhurst is Cuffnells, now the home of Mr. Reginald Hargreaves, and a place of many political associations. It was years ago the home of Sir George Rose, Privy Councillor, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and statesman, who had drifted into politics after being a midshipman in the Navy. He was Secretary to the Treasury under Pitt, Vice-President of the Board of Trade, and Joint Paymaster-General to the Forces. He sat in Parliament for Lymington at one time, and also for Christchurch, and was one of Pitt's most faithful lieutenants. The Prime Minister frequently came to Cuffnells, and Sir George also entertained George III and Queen Charlotte on several occasions when on their royal way from London to Weymouth. Sir William Harcourt lived there for a time too, during the building of the home of his later years, Malwood, close to Minstead.

Northerwood, which lifts itself above tree-embowered Lyndhurst and may be seen for miles across the heath land towards Beaulieu, was once the Forest home of the Earls of Londesborough, and the scene of much brilliant entertaining fifty years ago. Another famous house is Foxlease, said to have been copied from Sir Robert Walpole's home at Strawberry Hill. In the last century it was for a long time the home of Captain Buckworth Powell, a great figure in Forest hunting,

but in more recent times it was the property of an American lady, Mrs. Saunderson. On her return to America, following her decision to give up her home in England, it was offered to the Girl Guides movement as a permanent training camp and head-quarters. Sixty acres of land went with this munificent gift, and the Guides, then a fairly young organization with no very great resources, were naturally a little dubious about accepting a charge which, great as was its potential usefulness, must necessarily cause them some financial anxiety under the head of maintenance. The Guides wanted it badly, and their sense that the offer was providential, if the other little matter could be adjusted, was increased by the fact that the Chief Scout, who is a kind of Elder Brother to the Guides, is himself a relative of the Powells who lived for so many years at Foxlease.

The difficulty was got over most happily. Princess Mary, who is President of the organization, decided to apply the wedding gift of the Marys of the Empire to the upkeep of Foxlease, which became thereafter Princess Mary's House, and later she added to this £6,000 gift, a sum of £4,000 from the proceeds of the exhibition of the Royal wedding presents, this making it possible to endow the house and to start it upon its useful way as a convalescent and rest house for Guide workers, a camping ground, and a training school for Guiders.

The Guides themselves followed up this splendid beginning by making themselves, in groups, responsible for particular necessities of equipment. London Guides furnished the drawing-room ; Scottish Guides met the needs of another room. The Colonies were interested in the same way and sent characteristic decorative articles. American Guides sent the equipment for a room which in the expressive guide way is called "The Link," because it is the means by which

KNIGHTWOOD OAK, LYNDHURST

the Guides of the two nations can pass to a better understanding of each other within the far-flung limits of Guidehood.

It was a wonderful gift, and it is being imaginatively handled, with the result that it has already become, though a Guide possession only for a couple of years, a vital thing in their philosophy.

The curly main street of the village has many other rich sporting memories. There, outside King's House, the Forest Keepers in green gathered to show sport to Kings and Princes. There, to-day, the Hunt gathers, generally at Bolton's Bench at the other end of the village, and there are no more popular meets in the season either for Buckhounds or Foxhounds than these, especially at the season's end. The New Forest Foxhounds hunt longer into the spring than do the packs in the Shires, and the little town is full in late April of Masters of other packs who like to spend the fag-end of the season in woodland hunting.

That is the Lyndhurst "season." The hotels are crowded—some of them were country houses once—the smaller houses of the village dwellers are full to the roof, and every day there is a great rattling and scurrying as the visitors depart to near or distant meet. It doesn't last long : the Lyndhurst "season" is over in a fortnight, although there are always Forest lovers staying in the place, apart from the unnumbered thousands who come by char-à-banc from every town within fifty miles during high summer. They are all Forest lovers too, even though they get but flashing glimpses of it, and are never out of sight of the main road if they can help it lest they get lost or bogged. The townsman certainly loves the Forest in these days, but he fears it too, and his fear of the bog, with its cotton-grass and its green moss, is almost comical.

Many of the more extensive bogs are in the near neighbourhood of Lyndhurst. One bears the name of

the village, and its proximity causes it to be the subject of perennial discussion. The suggestion has been many times made, generally when unemployment is acute, that it should be drained, but nothing has ever been done. It is, of course, possible to remove the menace of a bog by draining, but the Foresters know that it is a vastly costly job and that there is not likely to be a great enthusiasm for dealing with it on the part of a department which hasn't got a bog for a near neighbour and cannot therefore lose stock because of it.

The village of Boghampton, by the way, has not, in spite of its suggestive name, any association at all with marshy ground. The name is a corruption of "boc," which relates to the way in which the land is held—a sort of freehold.

Longslade near Brockenhurst is the largest bog in the Forest. Matley Bog and Denny Bog are also important as hunting grounds for the botanist.

Royal visits were somewhat spasmodic things in the Forest's story. The Norman Kings were often there; Edward I was a not infrequent visitor; and Charles II and James, both interested in hunting, came often, and stayed at King's House.

When George III paid a visit the Duke of Gloucester was Lord Warden, and in the Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay, quoted by Mr. Gerald Lascelles in his book, it was shown that the King in a gracious humour "permitted the people to come to the window, and their delight and rapture in seeing their Monarch at table, with the evident hungry feeling it occasioned, made a contrast of admiration and deprivation truly comic. They crowded, however, so excessively, that this can be permitted them no more. They broke down all the paling and much of the hedges and some of the windows, and all by eagerness and multitude, for they were perfectly civil and well behaved."

George III paid a second visit a few years afterwards, staying at Cuffnells, at the time that Sir George Rose was living there.

Queen Victoria never visited the Forest at all during her long reign, and King Edward but once, and King George V not at all—since he ascended the throne at least. But in modern times foreign royalties often came. The King of Spain is a Forest lover, and when in England used regularly to motor there. So did William II of Germany during that stay at Highcliffe Castle which everybody in the south-western Forest so well remembers, if for no other reason because he insisted upon his motor-car being pressed to a speed which placed other users of the King's highway in peril, and because of his weakness for planting trees when he visited the historic homes of southern Hampshire.

CHAPTER VIII

ROUND ABOUT BROCKENHURST

Brockenhurst—Popularity as a Residential Centre—The Lawns and the Heathland—New Park—Rhinefield and the Ornamental Drive—The Lodges—Boldre—Gilpin's Home.

BROCKENHURST is as nearly as possible the centre of the Forest. Four miles from Lyndhurst, and separated by the great woods of Gritnam and Ramnor, between which mighty avenue the roadway passes, it is winning a great vogue as a residential centre, in great part because it is a railway junction with an admirable train service.

It is a place of lordly hotels, of ancient forest houses of great beauty like the Morant family home, Brokenhurst Park, and of jolly new houses on the margin of the Forest, bowered in trees. Brockenhurst itself is not forest land at all, being one of the privately owned estates within the Forest, and it is for this reason, no doubt, that it is enjoying very enlightened development.

And all this is the product of about fifty years. When Wise wrote of Brockenhurst he said it was "a real pleasure to find some spot on the earth not yet disfigured by fashionable hotels." Brockenhurst has to-day more hotels of the first class than any other place within the Forest.

All about the village the great woods rise—on the one hand Hinchelsea, with Rhinefield close at hand, and Boldrewood's great mass may also be seen. To

the north-east lies Woodfidley, of which it is said that it rains all day when it comes from Woodfidley, with Framewood, and the deep peace of Ladycross; and on every hand in a southerly direction there is the great plain, the top of the southern Forest as it were, stretching to Markway Hill in one direction, to Beaulieu in the other, with the plain of Setley due south.

There is here every sort of woodland. Beautiful old thorns at Hinchelsea; splendid yews on the road to Beaulieu; groves near at hand; the deep woods on the skyline, with the lovely lawn of Balmer near the village.

Balmer is the most beautiful of all the Forest lawns, but they all have their charm. Sometimes they are little valleys through which tiny brown Forest streams trickle. Even-water Bottom, which is one of them, has a spreading pool, but in others this feature is absent. Yew Tree Bottom, Two Beeches Bottom and Furzy Lawn have names which indicate their characteristics, and sometimes they are called just "valleys" or "greens." "Bottom" is not really a forest name, though very commonly used to indicate low-lying land. Throughout Hampshire the name recurs to designate hamlets and villages which lie at the foot of hills and in the river valleys.

The breezy heathlands hereabout provide just such a prospect as may be obtained from the plateau of the Northern Forest near Bramshaw. The woodlands lie spread out in swelling masses, terraced and hanging; far across the springy heather and the thin belt of woods near the sea, the bare hills of the Isle of Wight are pencilled blue-grey, and in between is the brighter streak of the Solent. Here and there, springing out of the plain, are the tumuli of the long-forgotten dead, and it was from the woods of Setthorn (and those of Queen Bower), close at hand, that the mightiest

oaks which went to the building of an invincible navy were felled.

Brockenhurst is probably the most rapidly developing place within the Forest in these days, but all the growth is modern. Brocaste was its romantic Domesday name, but Wise's explanation of its derivation is that it came from the words "Badger's Wood." It may be so. It is one of the laws of the Forest that there are many explanations of the derivation of place-names. One does not feel called to be dogmatic about it, but one feels that some of the wise old Foresters did the naming with extraordinary precision and effect—"Deer-leap," "Markway," and so on. There is romance in every letter of them.

Just outside Brockenhurst, on the Lyndhurst road, is New Park, one of the pleasantest of New Forest homes, and, in spite of its name, a house of considerable importance in Forest history. Once the park was used to secure cattle strayed and forfeited to the Lord Warden. In the late seventeenth century it was employed by Charles II to harbour red deer imported from France.

Sometimes the Lord Warden lived in the house, and, indeed, in fairly modern times the Deputy-Surveyors had it for head-quarters. Later still it was a farm, converted once more into a pleasant country home.

Rhinefield, too, was one of the centres of administrative control. At the beautifully situated lodge, the position of which aroused Gilpin to an ecstasy, a Master Keeper lived, and in the eighteenth century it was the residence of the Lord Warden's deputy, who was also Master Keeper of two great "Walks," Rhinefield and Wilverley. Thereafter it descended to a groom-keeper's lodge, and was in consequence reduced in size—many of the Forest lodges suffered this fate. Upon its site a modern country house now stands.

The Ornamental drive, which bears the same name, is one of the great attractions of the Forest for the modern tourist whose invariable demand is for scenic contrasts and for the unusual. The rhododendrons in Rhinefield meet this need. They are incongruous in the middle of the Forest, and especially do they seem so in late spring when the great green shrubs are spangled in white and pink and mauve. They have a story, these rhododendrons, and the showy conifers in the same plantation. There is nothing accidental about it, although it lies in the very centre of the natural Forest. It was laid out in the middle of the last century as a nursery for the young timber required in the planting campaign then in progress, and the official responsible for bringing on the seedlings lived in the lodge at that time. Oak and larch, and the ubiquitous Scotch fir, were thus raised and used, a great number of the beautiful conifers remaining where they were planted.

The nursery was an active piece of work for twenty or thirty years, after which it was abandoned and the ornamental trees and the shrubs allowed to grow at will.

This will be a not inappropriate place to speak of Boldrewood once crowned by a great Master Keeper's lodge, which had, said Gilpin, one of the finest situations in the Forest with great vistas and infinite variety of forest beauty. Only a few fragments remain of a once great house in which my lord of de la Warr maintained great estate, and these have been added to for the purpose of providing keepers' accommodation.

Of the lodge at Burley, which has in many respects the most interesting story of all—one of almost feudal state—I propose to write in the chapter which deals with that most lovely part of the Forest, but some of the other lodges, the head-quarters of the walks or bailiwicks, may be described conveniently here.

Several, Ashurst, Ironshill, Wilverley and Holmesley, all of them having been rebuilt, are in the occupation of present-day Forest officials; one, Eyeworth, on the great Northern plain, became the headquarters of a Gunpowder Company, and the others, rebuilt and having especial beauties of situation, have become most delightful country houses. They include Castle Malwood, Lady Cross, and Whitley Ridge, near Brockenhurst; and Broomy and Bramble Hill, the latter of which is near Bramshaw.

Boldre, the village, is some little distance away, much nearer the southern boundary, but at no great distance from Brockenhurst. One of the most ancient of forest villages with a twelfth-century Church—part of it at all events—it was the home for years of the Rev. William Gilpin, who, in addition to carrying out the duties of parish priest and founding very excellent schools, was the author of the not very happily named "Remarks on Forest Scenery," which in its amazing erudition is still the greatest of all Forest books—a very mine of close observation and sound knowledge.

Gilpin's headstone in the picturesque churchyard contains an indication that the long years at Boldre were happy as well as fruitful, for after a reference to the hopes of the priest and his wife to a "joyful immortality," are the words: "Here it will be a new joy to meet several of their good neighbours who now lye scattered in these sacred precincts about them."

CHAPTER IX

THE FOREST LITTORAL

Hurst Castle—The great Bay and its Charm—Lymington—Once a considerable Port—Humours of Admiralty Jurisdiction—A very rotten Borough—Beautiful Coast Houses.

PROBABLY the Conqueror's Forest, and almost certainly the Ytene of Canute, reached the coast—the Solent on the south and Southampton Water on the east. This is the case no longer. The line runs roughly parallel still, but a little inland. Still the coast folk call themselves Foresters, and they are as reasonably entitled to the name as those who dwell within central villages which are no longer Crown land. Every yard of the coast which lies between Calshot Castle, where Southampton Water joins the Solent and the mouth of the Avon, is historic ground, and there are not wanting signs that a new fame may come to it as a place of resort for the discerning. Already week-end houses exist in considerable numbers at the coast villages of Milford, Barton, and Highcliffe; and the sandy cliffs between are studded with new houses, sometimes humble bungalows, sometimes elaborate marine villas; the phrase is very expressive, and occasionally big hotels, as luxurious as any at the established resorts. Unquestionably the Forest littoral has a prosperous future in this respect, and one of the reasons for this is that the Forest is so close.

Hurst Castle, the only significance of which in these

days is that it is a signal station for ocean craft making Southampton by way of the western passage, looks "interesting," whether viewed from the sea or the land, but the long and punishing stretch of shingle which separates it from civilization, helps to maintain the isolation which it outwardly suggests. It was one of the fortifications built by Henry VIII, and the evidence is pretty nearly conclusive that the stone which went to its building was taken from the ruins of Beaulieu Abbey. Charles I was a prisoner there for a while on his way from Carisbrooke to the place of execution.

As a part of the coastal defences Hurst Castle has no present-day importance owing to its situation, the Western passage being amply protected by the fortifications on the Island.

The "shingly" causeway on which Hurst Castle stands juts out peninsula-wise from this pleasant coast for a distance of nearly two miles, and in bad weather, when the waves often make the passage to the Castle nearly impossible, the place is as bleak as any round the coast. Even Gilpin, who saw beauty in everything within his orbit, was depressed by it. The great bay which lies to the westward, stretching from Hurst to Hengistbury Head, beyond the mouth of the Avon, was said by the same observer to be "picturesque here and there, but the whole, though amusing, is too vast for the pencil."

The use of the word "amusing" is intriguing. The yellow sandy cliffs, green-topped, the clustered houses, "breaks," like Chewton Glen, and the grey cliffs of the Western Wight near the Needles, go to make up a picture which is not exactly impressive, but it is homely and English, and on a sunny day very full of charm. But Gilpin often uses the word in an unusual way, and some of his critics have sometimes been incensed by it.

Lymington, at the mouth of one of the only two Forest rivers of any consequence, is a little chartered borough, one of the smallest and most interesting in a county which has many such. There was a Saxon town thereabouts, on the marshy edge of the river mouth presumably—Saxon river towns were often like that, the earliest, Southampton, furnishing another example ; and a little distance inland the signs are still visible, at Buckland Rings, of a Roman settlement.

Later it was a very considerable port, situated within the Admiralty jurisdiction of Southampton (in which Portsmouth was also embraced), and in the days when naval needs were met by levies upon seaports Lymington made valiant contribution, exceeding those of Portsmouth and Southampton.

Lymington in those days greatly resented the maritime suzerainty which Mayors of Southampton, as Admirals of the Port, exercised. It was the practice of the Mayors in this special capacity, to make an annual perambulation of the waters between Portsmouth and Keyhaven in order to hear complaints from the fishing villages, and generally to see that the King's writ was duly honoured. It was part of the Port Admiral's duty to hold a yearly Court, and not infrequently this was held at Lymington, which was within the Admiral's jurisdiction.

A booth was erected on the quay for the purposes of the Court, and the Silver Oar, the badge of Admiralty, still used ceremonially at Southampton, was carried through the streets of Lymington to the anger of the inhabitants. They told the " foreigners " from Southampton, in 1707 or 1708, that if Admiralty jurisdiction did indeed extend to Lymington, courtesy demanded that permission for the setting up of the booth ought first to have been sought.

The Corporation of Southampton made reply that

hampton, visible from all the high ground at Lymington, and on the other side of the river.

The town has some interesting literary associations. Coventry Patmore once had his home there, and so did Caroline Bowles, Southey's second wife—they were married at Boldre, not far away. Tennyson's home at Farringford, near Freshwater, could almost be seen from the shore across the narrowing Solent.

There are many famous and beautiful houses along this pleasant and much-favoured coast. Walhampton is the best known. The gardens, which greatly pleased Gilpin, are horticulturally important to-day, especially in regard to the treatment of the lakes. Lord and Lady St. Cyres, who now live there, are both enthusiasts in this respect. The place has an interesting story. Wriothesley, who was afterwards Earl of Southampton, possessed it after the dissolution on a grant by Henry VIII, and the Earls of Arundel lived there before the Burrards began their long reign.

Pylewell, which also has very lovely and "important" gardens, and Newlands, are other of the great houses of this district, and along the cliffs towards Christchurch was a great colonnaded sea-palace built by Lord Bute, which was upon a point of cliff which has disappeared into the sea. Erosion has always been a very serious matter in this great bay, and the actual loss of territory has been quite considerable.

While on the subject of the stately homes of the Hampshire littoral, a reference may be permitted to Highcliffe Castle, roughly half-way between Lymington and Christchurch.

The site of the original house which Lord Bute built is now two miles out at sea. His son, to whom it passed, sold the estates at Highcliffe to Mr. Penleaze,

who built a house upon the cliff-top for his own occupation.

Later, however, Lord Stuart de Rothesay, of the family of which Lord Bute was the head, acquired the family property again, and built another house under somewhat remarkable circumstances. He bought an old house in Normandy at Les Andelys, which had fallen into the hands of the house-breakers, and, choosing the best of the material, tracery, and beautiful window-frames of stone-work, carried it across the Channel for the enrichment of the castle at Highcliffe, which, with the aid of an enthusiastic architect, he transformed into one of the show-places of the County. The original scheme, somewhat grandiose in conception, was never completed, but the house, full of artistic treasures, is very interesting and has a rare beauty of situation. Upon the sea front of the house are two lines from Lucretius, the translation of which is said to be as follows:

> 'Tis sweet when winds make the great ocean boil
> From land to watch another slowly toil.

CHAPTER X

THE COAST VILLAGES

A Garden Village by the Sea—Highcliffe—A Wooden Hut Town—The Dunes at Mudeford—The Forest Streams.

THE coast villages dotted along the Sunny Solent have, one feels, a future. Before motor traffic revealed these bright, flower-strewn cliffs, and the deep bunnies and glens, they lived remote and secluded lives, for the railway did not conveniently serve any of them.

All that has been changed. Milford-on-Sea, almost facing the Needles, is in part an old-fashioned village, and in part a kind of super garden suburb by the sea. Modern domestic architecture, as applied to seaside homes, has taken on many delightful forms at Milford. There are dream-like bungalows amid the wind-tossed scrub oak of the cliff-top, which suggest romance in every line. Milford's future seems to lie in the direction of a luxurious village of rest.

Highcliffe, on the other hand, makes a bid for a wider popularity. For a reason not easily discernible, it has achieved a vogue with people living in the towns of southern England as a kind of seaside playground where formality is shed and everybody lives a joyful, picnic life, *sans* convention. Gradually the amenities of the modern seaside resort, which has decided to grow up, are being added, but not hurriedly and on no recognizable plan. Highcliffe has packed itself along a little stretch of the coast road in a terribly

cramped kind of way. It cries aloud for a bit of coherent town planning, but it probably will not get it now : it is too late. Those who have put up elaborate shop-fronts, much too near the line of the road either for grace or comfort, for no better reason than that there was the building line when Highcliffe was really a village without any hope of growing up, will not want to " get back a bit " now. The result is that Highcliffe will always look casual—rather like a growing boy whose arms and ankles have come too far through his garments.

The small fry among the seaside resorts often make a better job of growing up if they are left to themselves. Highcliffe is not one of them, but it looks prosperous and happy. It may appear to lack the dignity of Milford, which is outwardly very, very much like it, but amazingly different in essence, but I don't know anybody who would have it other than it is. It is rather like what a lakeside resort in Canada would be like in its infancy. There is the same happy freedom from " side."

A road which does not appear to have any serious purpose in life leads, in fact, to the sea with the Needles rock " just across the way," and it is just there that Highcliffe has allowed itself to express its personality most definitely. Dotted about the low cliffs, among the scrub and upon the terraces of clay, are little huts, hardly more than boxes most of them, the sun and sea homes of their owners. Nobody lives in them ; they are all " day places " ; and at eventide the beach is generally as deserted as it used to be before the little wooden town rose out of the golden gorse by the cliff-top. The devotees of Highcliffe have reduced simplicity to its lowest common denominator : they have stuck up huts just anywhere : they have leased a little bit of ground, four square, perhaps as big as a full-sized blanket ; and thereafter they

have let their imaginations have full rein. Here and there attempts at elaboration have been made by people who have not understood the simple philosophy of the sun-seekers, who have gone thither because it was the whim of the moment ; but such are out of key ; they are even a little ridiculous.

Those who seek their seaside pleasure noisily would be utterly bored with Highcliffe in five minutes, but for the person who seeks nothing but the sun and the breezes of the Channel, with sketchy meals prepared on an oil-stove in a pegged-down van tilt, Highcliffe is the place. Yes, there is an atmosphere about Highcliffe which is almost unique.

Mudeford, nearer to Christchurch, is rather like it, save that in place of the shingle there are dunes of fine sand, giving the sea-line hereabouts a faint resemblance to the Belgian coast. But Mudeford has also the Avon outpouring between the old village and the little sunshiny townlet of huts upon the dunes, and the Avon has a holiday river life rather like that of the Thames—with house-boats gleaming white. And there is even a hint of the Norfolk Broads, for the wide, slow river winds towards the sea between flat meadows from which white sails seem to be uprising.

The streams which rise within the Forest and find their way to the sea upon this coast are insignificant though often picturesque. Both the Beaulieu river and the Lymington river (rising in Ocknell) cross the centre of the Forest, but above Brockenhurst the latter is a trivial stream, winding between the trees in the deep woods, and, as it nears the coast, widening into a stream which looks considerable at high tide by reason of the flatness of the lower valley, but with little depth.

The Beaulieu river, often called the Exe, has similar characteristics in its course from its rising, not far

from Lyndhurst, to the Solent at Needsore point. It is but a bare ten miles in length (the Lymington river is four miles longer), though from its appearance below Beaulieu, from which point it is tidal, one would gain the impression that it was a really important stream. There is no great depth, and its vast stretches of soft mud are a trap to the unsuspecting yachtsman, who, tempted to ignore local marks, ventures up towards the wooded country which can be seen above the flats.

Still, the Beaulieu river is rich in " pretty " places, both above the village and below, and the fishing, though not of great importance, is valued by Forest sportsmen.

There are other little brown streams here and there, which burrow their silent way through the woods, almost overhung often enough ; but they all find their way into the rivers mentioned or into the Avon. The latter famous salmon river is not within the Forest at all, though it runs roughly parallel to the Western boundary, broadening out, as do nearly all the southern rivers, into a wide and shallow but highly picturesque estuary below Christchurch, and narrowing again to reach the sea at Mudeford.

Tiny streams rising in the gravelly heathlands of the southern Forest, and cutting their way through the glens on the sea-board, are in some cases too trivial even to be named.

CHAPTER XI

THE EASTERN FOREST

Fawley—Ancient Village and Oil Port—Model Villages—Exbury and Beaulieu—The Abbey—The Forest's richest Treasure—The Legend of its Founding—The Right of Sanctuary.

THE area which I have roughly described as the eastern Forest is the vastly interesting and historically important territory lying between the Beaulieu river and Southampton Water. It is heathland very largely, and nearer Southampton Water is not natural forest at all. It is a remote and not very widely known corner, quite, until now, inaccessible by rail, but likely in the future to grow into an area of commercial consequence as the result of the building of a railway along this bank of Southampton Water.

Fawley, near the mouth of Southampton Water, for instance, is by way of becoming an oil port, and the whole shore will not improbably have a commercial outlook, especially if, in the possibly rather distant future, the Test—higher up—is bridged, in order to permit the cramped port of Southampton elbow-room.

That time is not yet, however.

At the southern extremity of this part of the Forest, at the edge of the sea that is, are vast stretches of unlovely mud flats, often covered at high water, and though wild-fowling is obtainable, the appearance of this part of the Forest shore from the sea is not in

the least inviting. But inland the rising woods furnish admirable contrast to this seeming desolation, and nestling among them are model villages, grouped about old manor houses, living a sequestered life untouched as yet by the hurryings and strivings and yearnings of the towns.

Some of these villages have much more than beauty of situation. Exbury, which Gilpin rhapsodized over when Col. Mitford lived there—it inspired that chronicler to extravagances of panegyric, rather unusual with him, for he was sometimes a little acid about the landscape gardening of his time—is in process of becoming a wonder village. Mr. Lionel de Rothschild, who now lives at Exbury House, is laying out the estate on the grand scale. His gardens, when complete, will be beyond compare in a county of many beautiful gardens; unique possibly in the kingdom.

Beaulieu, at the other end of the estuary, has claims to be called a model village too. It is so truly the English village of a ripe tradition that it is much favoured for the making of cinematograph films, but it has much more than a pleasing mellowness, for, though small, it has its electric-light system and many amenities which villages yearn for but often fail to achieve.

And of course the Abbey, one of the most important of the monastic ruins of England, is the richest archæological treasure in the Forest. This is not the place to tell its story. It has been done already expertly, and a dozen times. But the visitor, knowing only that it has a rare beauty of situation and that it is a Cistercian foundation, may like to have an outline of its history and a few pointers in order that they may recognize those features which remain.

At its foundation it was called Bellus Locus, because of the beauty of its situation, and the story of its founding forms one of the few legends of the Forest of which there is record.

BEAULIEU : A MODEL VILLAGE

When the Cistercian Abbots were called together by King John at Lincoln it was in their minds that the King contemplated making them grants for the furtherance of their work. Instead, he ordered the monks to be trodden under the horses of his retinue. Only the horsemen's fear of thus treating holy men saved them. The same night the King was troubled by a dream in which he was very soundly thrashed by the incensed Abbots. So vivid was it that when he woke he could still feel the ache of his punishment.

In contrition he consulted a priest about the Court, who told him that a Heaven-sent opportunity was being vouchsafed to him of expiating his sin against the Church. Advised to seek pardon of the Abbots, the King not only did this but endowed an abbey for the benefit of the monks, giving them land in the Royal Forest, other lands for revenue, money from the Royal purse for the building of the monastery, freedom from duties which operated oppressively upon other religious institutions, and placing some of these others in subordination to Beaulieu.

Since, in addition, according to the legend, the King required the other establishments owning allegiance to Citeaux to assist in the building of the monastery, Beaulieu, well endowed and enjoying the King's high favour in other ways, became the most powerful Cistercian house in the land. Other monarchs showed privileges and grants which grew more valuable as the years passed. One gave the freedom of the Cinque ports, which meant the avoidance of shipping dues; Henry III attended its inauguration in state; and the Pope (Innocent III) granted the right of sanctuary there.

This right of sanctuary at Beaulieu was used more than once. Perkin Warbeck fled thither from Exeter, Lord Daubeny and a troop of horse pursuing, and claimed and received sanctuary. He could only be

got out again by promises of safe conduct which were afterwards broken. The Countess of Warwick also came there out of her enemies' way, and there is a tradition that Margaret of Anjou, on landing in England, and hearing of the defeat of Warwick, the Kingmaker, and the overthrow of the forces he led, came with her son straight to Beaulieu, for sanctuary, leaving only for the final despairing effort which ended in her defeat at Tewkesbury and the death of her son.

At the dissolution the great range of Beaulieu's buildings was drawn upon, not only for Hurst Castle, as has been shown, but also for the defence works at Calshot, at the other end of the Forest seaboard, and the lands and the remains of the establishment passed by the grant of Henry VIII to Thomas Wriothesley, later Earl of Southampton, who also held Walhampton, and the rich Abbey of the Premonstratensians at Titchfield, near Fareham.

Wriothesley, who has been described as the tool of Henry VIII, was, indeed, very richly dowered when the religious houses of Hampshire were disestablished.

Thomas Wriothesley's successor in title, the second Earl of Southampton, was Shakespeare's patron, of whom Sir Sydney Lee said that all the compliments paid by Shakespeare to youth were more or less addressed to the Earl. "Venus and Adonis" was dedicated to him, and another dedication contained the words: "What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours . . . were my worth greater my duty would show greater, meanwhile as it is, it is bound to your lordship, to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all happiness." The opening sentences of seventeen of the Sonnets were, according to the critic quoted, admonitions to the Earl to marry so that a great house might not fall into decay.

Beaulieu, however, passed by marriage into the family of Montagu, the first Duke of Montagu

having married a daughter of the house of Wriothesley, and, by marriage again, to the ducal family of Buccleuch, a member of which, Lord Henry Scott, became the first Baron Montagu of Beaulieu, and was the father of the present lord of that beautiful and extensive manor. Both the present Lord Montagu and his father have done much to preserve the Abbey and its appurtenances, and the restoration which has taken place in their loving hands, of the Abbot's Well and the Domus, has merited the warm approval of archæologists.

There is a whole literature of Beaulieu Abbey of which the remains now existing comprise portions of the Cloisters, the Quadrangle, the Refectory (used since the Dissolution as the Parish Church) and the Abbot's House, which, known as Palace House, is the family residence. Of the great Church there remains no trace, though its noble ground-plan has been marked out, but there is sufficient evidence both in this central place and in the outlying granges to show that the monks practised a very worthy industry and drew very considerable revenues from their wide and smiling lands.

At St. Leonard's, three and a half miles to the south, for example, was an immense barn, said to be the largest of its kind in England, seeing that it was 210 feet long by 70 feet broad. Some portions of the original barn remain, as do also bits of the Grange Chapel. Also there were Salterns attaching to the Abbey (a farm occupies their site to-day) and special farms for cattle and swine.

Though St. Leonards remains there are no traces of the other three granges which were once attached to Beaulieu. All of them were self-contained little monasteries, according to the Cistercian practice, peopled by lay brethren, who enjoyed a sort of home rule, and perhaps by a few monks as well.

CHAPTER XII

BUCKLER'S HARD

"Where the Wooden Walls were Built"—The "Seventy Fours"—The Romance of Montagu Town—Early Town Planning—A Scheme which Failed—Sowley Pond.

BUCKLER'S HARD, two miles to the south of Beaulieu village, and quite close to St. Leonards, is but a hamlet with two rows of cottages abutting on a grass-grown street of astonishing width. Once it was a place of tremendous industry as a centre of naval shipbuilding. The Adams family established themselves there at the head of the tidal waters (or nearly) and, winning large contracts from the Government, built great wooden men-o'-war there from the Forest oaks—frigates and sloops chiefly.

The first of a long line of great and small ships was the "Surprise" of 24 guns, which, according to the records in the possession of the Adams family, bore date 1745. Three ships were built in one year in 1749, one of these being the 44-gun "Woolwich."

The biggest ship in the first twenty years was "Europe," 64 guns, of which the "Vigilant" (1774) was another example. There were at least four "Seventy Fours," "Illustrious" (1785), "Spencer" (1800), "Swiftsure" (1804), and "Victorious" (1808). The list contains upwards of forty names of ships, ranging generally between 28 and 44 guns, with an occasional transport like "Lion," 151 tons, and armed with 4 guns.

In none of the available lists is the tonnage of these men-o'-warsmen given, except in the case of the transport mentioned, and a hoy which mounted only 4 guns, but an idea of their displacement may be gained from a consideration of the size of craft built about the same time at Bursledon, at the head of the Hamble river on the hither shore of Southampton Water.

The situation of the Adams Yard at Buckler's Hard, and that of Parsons at Bursledon, where shipbuilding was diligently practised between 1745 and 1800, was very similar. Both lay at the head of navigable waters on a winding stream, and, behind both, was a greatly wooded country (in the case of Bursledon the remains of the great Forest of Bere), from which naval material could be conveniently drawn. This was, of course, one reason for choosing such a site, but another, probably, was the desire to secure as much protection for a private yard in war-time as was possible.

However, to get back to the comparison which was in mind when this reference to Bursledon was begun, there was a 74-gun ship built at Bursledon in 1786 which was of 1,674 tons, about the size, presumably, of the "Seventy Fours," built at Buckler's Hard. A 60-gun "Anson," built forty years earlier on the same river, but by another builder, was of 1,197 tons. The 36-gun ships ran to between 800 and 900 tons, though two of them, "Penelope" and "Jason," were of over 1,000 tons.

Henry Adams was the original builder at Buckler's Hard, and he was succeeded by his son, Robert Adams. The practice of the time was to work on Admiralty contracts, the builder being paid at the rate of £33 10*s.* a ton for ships of the "Seventy Four" type, and these were usually about eighteen months on the stocks. A ship of 1,300 tons, which was rather less than the average of the "Seventy Fours," required 2,000 oak trees for its building, and into her also was

built about a hundred tons of wrought iron and about thirty tons of copper. Ship launches at Buckler's Hard were tremendous occasions. All the Foresters came to make holiday and to see "My Lords" of the Admiralty in their glory. As many as 10,000 people have in times past attended a Buckler's Hard launch.

It was not the coming of the iron ship which finally killed the industry there, but the attempt to expand at a greater rate than the circumstances warranted. In a busy time the owners of the yard tried to lay down four ships at once. It was found to be impossible and there were delays. These led to the imposition of penalties for non-fulfilment of contract and litigation, which in turn led finally to disaster.

There are certain traces of all this activity still remaining: it is possible to follow the line of the "ways," in which ships of the line found their way to the water. Moreover, Beaulieu itself contained more people in 1810 than it did a hundred years after, and this would probably be additional to the shipwrights at Buckler's Hard.

The place has the halo of another and somewhat earlier industrial romance still hanging about it, one which seemed to have had quite remarkable potentialities. It was the scheme of that Duke of Montagu who dug a moat about the Abbot's House at Beaulieu, and fortified the whole place by building a big wall in anticipation of a possible attack by the French, to which he seemed to think the situation of his home rendered him liable. He owned the Island of St. Lucia in the West Indies, where sugar was grown, and it occurred to his rather acute mind, that *qua* lord of Beaulieu the possessor of privileges in the way of freedom from certain dues, and having all the amenities of a port at hand, a profitable trade might be built up between

BEAULIEU ABBEY: CLOISTER ARCHES AND DOMUS

his West Indian Island and the little port which he also owned.

He conceived further that with cheap and good fuel handy, he might also refine the imported sugar on terms which would compare favourably in a commercial sense with those then prevailing.

Buckler's Hard was to be the scene of this venture and some considerable town and factory planning was indulged in. Perhaps the rather imposing width of the one and only street of Buckler's Hard is an indication of what was in the mind of the Duke.

But political considerations intervened. According to the " Colonial Office List " :

" After the Peace of Utrecht, 1713, the rival pretensions of England and France to the possession of St. Lucia assumed an attitude of open hostility. In 1718 the Regent d'Orleans made a grant of the Island to Marshal d'Estrees, and in 1722 the King of England made a grant of it to the Duke of Montagu. In the following year, however, a body of troops despatched to St. Lucia by the Governor of Martinique, compelled the English settlers to evacuate the island, and it was declared neutral. In 1744 the French took advantage of the declaration of war to resume possession of St. Lucia, which they retained till the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, when it was again declared neutral. In 1756, on the renewal of hostilities, the French put the island in a state of defence ; but in 1762 it surrendered to the joint operations of Admiral Rodney and General Monckton. In the following year by the Treaty of Paris it was assigned to France."

In this political confusion the Duke gave up any hope of putting his project into effect and it was abandoned. It was afterwards that the shipbuilding yard was established at Buckler's Hard.

This Duke of Montagu was the second of his line, his father, the first Duke, having become possessed of the Beaulieu estates by his marriage with Lady Elizabeth Wriothesley, daughter of the last Earl of Southampton. He himself married a daughter of the great

Duke of Marlborough. The title died with him, the second holder, but was renewed for his son-in-law, Earl of Cardigan, at whose death it became extinct again.

Not far from Beaulieu is Sowley Pond, which, with its 90 acres, is the largest sheet of water in the Forest. In some of the early records it is called Freshwater, and in others Colgrimsmere, a romantically sounding name the meaning of which is hidden. The monks of Beaulieu, at whose boundary it lay, fished there at one time, and pike and carp may still be taken. It is this monkish association which doubtless gave rise to the legend concerning a statue of solid gold which is traditionally said to lie beneath the water at Sowley, but the legend is so confused that it is impossible to say on what it is precisely based. Sowley Pond is very deep anyway. All sorts of things may lie amongst the weeds in its still depths. Hatchet Pond, also within the manor of Beaulieu and to the west of the house, is another of the larger of the few Forest ponds.

In the time of Gilpin the waters of Sowley were used to drive certain of the machinery at the ironworks in the vicinity.

CHAPTER XIII

FAWLEY AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

A Richly Wooded Shore—Calshot—Its Place in Defence—The Villages of the Border—An Industrial Corner—The Small Holder's Paradise—The Co-operative Ideal.

FAWLEY and its neighbourhood is held by the Drummond family, one member of whom was lectured by Gilpin, because, in connection with the high farming he practised at Cadland (the house, incomparably situated, overlooks Southampton Water), he housed his stock in greater luxury than seemed meet to the chronicler.

The cowsheds, the piggeries and the granaries constituted "a most splendid farm," but it was only a quarter of a mile from the house. "This is too much," said Gilpin (though plainly he meant that it was too little). Gilpin approved of the stables being near at hand for convenience sake, provided "they should contribute to the magnificence of the whole, by making one of the wings, or some other proper appendage of the pile."

"But for the cowsheds and pig styes, they have no title to such notice. Let them be convenient and neat, but let them be simple and unadorned. Heads of cattle are beautiful, in a high degree, in their proper place, among lawns and woods; but pent up as they are obliged to be, in yards, amidst filth and litter, they are no objects of beauty. Neither should their habitations be considered as such ornaments here."

Thus the good Gilpin. Never elsewhere in all his close-woven pages was he quite so censorious as this.

The whole of the area contiguous to the shore is still richly wooded; there are great oaks everywhere; vistas of pleasant parkland; prosperous holdings; and scattered hamlets growing now into big villages. The reason for this development is that Fawley has become an oil port concerned with the fuelling of great liners and the refining of the crude oil brought thither in tankers for treatment in order that the needs of Britain in the matter of motor spirit and engine oil may be met.

Calshot, on the point where Southampton Water meets the sea, ceased during the war to be a central place of defence and a depot for the training of heavy artillerists and became instead a great naval air station. It remains so in peace—one of the strong places of the R.A.F.

Calshot has its rock in Saxon story. Cerdic possibly landed thereabouts; and all through the ages it has been a place of consequence in home defence, although it lies within the Isle of Wight, and in these days of long-range gunnery is defended from afar.

Henry VIII built a fort or blockhouse there as part of his defensive scheme, which also comprised Hurst, laying further toll in all probability upon Beaulieu for the purpose. Portions remain of this stonework which would not stand five minutes of modern bombardment, and close at hand are great sheds of iron and wood, which house the 'planes of the R.A.F. quartered there. Sometimes these great amphibians float at anchor off the point, brown-skinned and awkward monsters as they swing to the tide, but graceful as birds when in their real element.

Hythe is the outlet by sea of the Forest villages. Fishing and yacht-building support it, and during the war seaplanes were built there too. It has no

claim to beauty, but from the sea at least it looks bustling, which appearance is increased by its quarter-mile-long pier from which a little steamboat, whose beam is nearly equal to her length, voyages to Southampton. Along the pier runs a tiny tramway, surely the most toy-like in all England.

Dibden and Marchwood, both adjoining Southampton Water, are pleasing little villages grouped about interesting churches and having on their confines prosperous steadings and pleasant country homes. Utterly unspoiled, both of them, because they lie at some distance from any of the great through highways, they look out across the flooding Test towards the great port, which is slowly reaching out the finger of a prosperous commercialism towards the head-waters of that river.

The countryside around Dibden and Marchwood comprised the "sweet fields beyond the swelling flood" of which Isaac Watts wrote, as he looked out towards the west from the top of the walls of old Southampton, and it has been said that some of the richest of the Turner sunsets glowed in the skies above it.

Eling, still nearer the head of the Test tideway, strikes quite another note.

It provides the nearest approach which Hampshire furnishes to the small and very brisk, industrial town —but not under that name. Eling is the name of a wide parish which, after Domesday, spread over the whole north-eastern Forest: the village which is so brisk and prosperous, and also slightly grubby, is called Totton. Only the church, a cluster of cottages, and the kind of quay which instantly calls up a picture of Sandwich port and Sam Small, is all that remains of many-acred Eling; these and a toll-gate over a bridge which Winchester College owns. This latter excites motorists to anger with great regularity, and

the anger is not lessened when the driver, on paying his "fine," is told that there are plenty of other toll-bridges in southern Hampshire. As a matter of fact, there is only one way out of Southampton on the whole of its eastern arc upon which no toll-bridge bars the way. Surprising, isn't it?

The church at Eling contains much that is notable. There is eleventh-century work there, still identifiable. Three bays were added in the twelfth century, and there is a wide chancel arch of thirteenth-century date. In the fifteenth century the north transept was altered, and the fine tower is of the sixteenth century.

In 1864 there was a process of restoration which has been described by the critics as drastic, when the north chapel was extended, the south chapel rebuilt, the south aisle widened and porches added.

Eling Church was attached to the Priory at Mottisfont at one time. The church plate, presented by Margaret Leigh in 1693, is especially beautiful, and the registers, which date from 1537, are excellently preserved in seven books. They are the earliest in date and the most voluminous in the county, and contain the records of 15,000 burials from 1537 until the opening of the new burial-ground about thirty years ago.

One of the many interesting brasses in the church—to the memory of a member of the great Hampshire family of Paulet—was found by the present Vicar, the Rev. T. Thistle, in a builder's yard. Mr. Thistle also restored to its rightful place a very beautiful altar picture of "The Last Supper," attributed to Marziale, a painter of the Venetian school, and a pupil of Bellini. It is generally accepted by competent authorities that it was presented to the church by Lord Sandys of Mottisfont, who was the patron of the living, and it remained in its place for perhaps three hundred years. In the early 'seventies it was taken

down and placed in the vestry, but twelve years afterwards was cleaned and framed, and hung on the wall of the south aisle, but too high up for the beauty of its detail to be seen. A few years ago Mr. Thistle had the reredos removed to the west end of the church, and the picture restored to its place at the altar. The late Sir Edward Poynter, then President of the Royal Academy, who examined it at the time, agreed with the attribution to Maro Marziale, and dated it about 1520. The picture is very beautiful indeed.

Totton, which is really Eling with a more modern but less attractive name, has creosote works, chemical works, flour and saw mills, and timber yards. It is, in a word, the only place within the Forest area—it is actually just outside the boundaries of the Forest proper—which is wholly given over to that kind of industry which involves smoke and grit and smells.

Totton lies on the great trunk road through the central Forest, and all the traffic has to pass through the bottle-neck of its main street after negotiating the most inconvenient double turn (in the very centre of which is a level-crossing) in all southern England.

It is the most unpromising approach to the glories of the Forest which could be imagined, and it is the more so because it can only be reached by a narrow bridge and causeway, at the other end of which is another level-crossing—two in half a mile. But all this difficulty is to be swept away soon. Before long it is intended to bridge the top of the tideway with a wide, sweeping road and bridge which will do away with the level-crossings and provide an entry to the Forest by road which shall be really worthy.

To the student of the ways of Forest folk this eastern corner has much that is of interest to show. Smallholders, established in all parts of the Forest where individual holdings of land are restricted, flourish exceedingly on the eastern edge.

Southampton provides them with a market, and they have readily learned the lesson that the " small man " can conveniently and easily reap worth-while rewards if he appreciates and uses the co-operative principle. The small-holders of Totton, Netley Marsh, Cadnam, Copythorne and the other chain of villages along the north-eastern Forest boundary, bound together by this common interest, are practising co-operative buying and selling on a scale which must astonish even them, seeing how rapidly it has grown up. They even run an agricultural show of increasing importance.

Hampshire seems to be favourable soil for the growth of this economic movement, which, more than anything else, will help to bring prosperity back to the countryside. There is a better example still on the other side of Southampton in the Hamble and Meon valleys—the strawberry country—where the necessity of seizing the market quickly has driven the growers to the practice of a highly scientific form of co-operation. Round about Winchester, too, agricultural co-operation lives and thrives as the result of the effort of the " small men." It is all very hopeful and of good report. Even those who are convinced that agriculture is having the fight of its life admit that.

CHAPTER XIV

FOREST FIRES

The Heathlands—Fire Risks—Eighty Acres of Flame—How Fires are Fought.

IT is the heath country on the eastern part of the Forest that fire quite frequently ravages, though such things are not unknown elsewhere—on the central tableland, for instance, where the heather also thrives. It is not the only destructive agency which the Forest knows, but it is the only one which is visible. Decay there always is, and, everlastingly, the slow war between the beech and the oak, which, according to Evelyn, the beech always wins in the end.

Tempest, too, does damage occasionally, but rarely on the scale of that Forest catastrophe of 1703 when four thousand trees were destroyed.

Fire, however, is the greatest menace of all, though as long as it is confined to the heather the damage is trivial. Indeed, it is the fixed belief of all Foresters that fire improves the pasturage. There is no doubt about it either. The tender green, which the beasts of the Forests love, shows through the blackened ground in surprisingly quick time. The Verderers regularly order burnings, which are carefully carried out by skilled men, to safeguard the plantations by clearing a belt about them. The circumstance has encouraged Foresters to believe that what authority does is open to them also by implication. As long

ago as the late eighteenth century this unofficial burning was practised, and one fire, started in this way in the northern Forest, could not be stopped, and considerable damage was done.

In any dry spring this menace exists. There was a fire which swallowed eighty acres on a Good Friday a few years ago, and there were fifty-acre fires on the Sunday and Monday. Night was lurid in that year with Forest fires. Sometimes in dry weather they begin as early as February.

The most serious fairly modern fire was the Slufters fire in 1882. It broke out near the Ringwood Road and ran before the wind at phenomenal speed, mile after mile of the most verdant part of the Forest being laid bare ; and the glare of it was visible in three counties.

In another year there was a fire covering seventy acres quite near Knightwood Oak, though that famous tree, owing to the direction of the wind, probably, was not in any danger.

Spectacular these fires undoubtedly are. The great cloud-banks of smoke seem from afar to portend an alarming state of affairs. Close at hand the fire roars like a cataract. Sharp-tongued flames leap through the reddened smoke billows, marching steadfastly before the wind. The great gaunt firs, stretching black fingers to heaven, seem first to wither and then to melt into flame. Birds, driven from their nests, hover above agitatedly, and after the passage of the flames dead rabbits, roasted, lie in scores.

They are comparable, though the scale is vastly different, to the fires of the prairie, and the method of fighting them is the same—to cut a swathe, as it were, across which the fire will not pass because there is nothing to burn.

In dry years the fire organization is very elaborate. Years ago an arrangement was made to cut away

THE SPREADING FOREST : NEAR RUFUS STONE

inflammable material from the neighbourhood of the railway lines so that the risk from passing engines is now almost infinitesimal. But it is difficult to prevent the fire which is "accidentally done on purpose" in order to improve herbage, just as it is impossible to prevent the lighting of picnic fires. The careless dropping of matches has also been a fruitful cause.

Some years ago, when dry springs succeeded each other for several years, the Commoners were required by urgent notice to refrain from burning for pasturage purposes, and watchers were appointed to patrol particular danger areas. One such was the eastern Forest; there was another area from Minstead to Fordingbridge; a third from Brockenhurst to Christchurch.

Beaulieu Heath, for no very clear reason, was the place which most frequently "caught alight" about that time, but open country, having similar characteristics, was very rarely affected; nobody knew why. Between Longdown and Ipley there were frequent outbreaks, and many on the western border approaching Fordingbridge.

CHAPTER XV

THE NORTHERN FOREST

Eighteenth-century Plantings—The Forest Panorama—Where it may best be seen—"The Trusty Servant"—Five-hundred-year-old Inns—Rufus Stone—The Drama of the Red King's Fall—A Priestly Conspiracy.

THE area which for this purpose I have called the northern Forest, would be that roughly which stretches up into county Hampshire and to the Wiltshire border from a line drawn north of Lyndhurst, and through Emery Down, Puckpits, Slufters and Roe to the boundary between Ringwood and Fordingbridge.

The whole of the lower part is thick woodland and includes some of the oldest plantations in the Forest. Mr. Heywood Sumner gives the date of the planting of Ocknell, for instance, as 1775, while Puckpits was enclosed as early as 1700 ; Sloden is another old enclosure.

To the north is the great heathland, the top of the Forest as it were, with Ocknell Pond as one of its easily recognizable features.

Another of the great woods within this portion of the Forest is Boldrewood, which is, as a matter of fact, rather south of the imaginary line. It lies high and has as its chief feature the great beauty and variety of its growth of firs, though Gilpin was greatly impressed " by the rich Forest scenery composed chiefly of beech—among the most beautiful of their kind."

All the woods hereabouts are notable, those near

Canterton, Castle Malwood, and Stony Cross especially so, but they scarcely need to be separately described in such a record as this. Every visitor to the Forest has his or her own preconception of woodland beauty. To some the "green glade," as Tennyson called it, of the great silent beech-woods appeals—he is said to have had Mark Ash in his mind; to others the dim symmetry of the firs; to yet another class the grace of line of the yews of Sloden and the majesty of the cedars here and there.

For me, if I may just once depart from the purely impartial, let it be the splendid whole, or as much as can fill the eye from a single point such as Pipers Wait or Bramble Hill, which provides perhaps the widest view in all the Forest. The woods raise their heads in great, ridged, green waves; masses of them, right away over the valley, to Whitley; and beyond the heath-land, purple or dun according to the season, there is the outline of Southampton with the funnels of the greatest liners etched against the dark line which is the Isle of Wight. It is ineffably satisfying.

And at night, when the whole south-eastern sky is suffused with warm grey, the reflected lights of the town twelve miles away seem to give an atmosphere even to the dim and quiet forest. The night scene from the hill-top over the woods to the great gleaming river and the town glowing with dim light, is one which has for years been photographed upon my mind as one of the most enduring of the Forest pictures.

Or give me the wide and spacious prospect, from the top of the plain on the great main road half-way to Christchurch, with the moorland on the hitherside of Burley, and the gleaming woods, piling up from the Ringwood Road, all within the field of vision, or the wind-swept expanse towards Wootton, fringed with trees, amid which gracious, many-windowed homes gleam like jewels.

From Longcross, Salisbury Spire, 404 feet "up" it is true, can be seen: Thorny Hill is a splendid vantage point; and Mogshade Hill (a truly romantic name) and the plain about Picket Post are others.

Stony Cross provides a vast panorama, with glimpses across the massive shoulders of the green woods to the plain far beyond, and even to the Needles across the Solent.

The villages of this Northern Forest are few and scattered, and most of the roads are quite deserted in spite of the fact that on the great trunk road through the central Forest the hum of motor traffic never dies till after dark. There is Emery Down, quite close to Lyndhurst, a charmingly snug little village; Minstead, one of the great Forest manors, with its quaintly named inn "The Trusty Servant," the emblem of which is copied from the famous picture at Winchester College. Wise, so meticulous as a rule, called it "The Faithful Servant," but the earlier form must be the right one, because the verse runs thus:

A trusty servant's portrait would you see,
This emblematic figure well survey:
The porker's snout—not nice in diet shows;
The padlock's shut—no secrets he'll disclose;
Patient the ass—his Master's wrath to bear;
Swiftness in errand—the stag's feet declare;
Loaded his left hand; apt to labour saith;
The vest—his neatness; open hand—his faith;
Girt with his sword his shield upon his arm—
Himself and master he'll protect from harm.

Talking of the Forest inns, of which the "Trusty Servant" is one of the best known, there are others more ancient even than this. The "Cat and Fiddle" at Hinton Admiral (whose sign is that of the nursery rhyme, with the cow jumping over the moon) is said to be one of the oldest in the country. That is hard to prove, but it is indubitable that the "Cat and Fiddle" is ten miles away at least from any licensed house on

the Lyndhurst side, and I dare swear that there are not many main roads in England where the " pubs " are a full ten miles apart.

Then there was the " Red Lion " at Totton, just pulled down to straighten out a dangerous corner, which was five hundred years old, and which had its licence and all its tradition transferred to a new red-brick " Red Lion," which was built in the back garden and completed even to its sign, before the house-breaker laid hands on the Forest's first posting house.

Close to Stony Cross, in the glade at the foot of the hill known as Canterton Glen, is the spot at which King William Rufus fell, and it is for that reason, so strong is our hold upon those things which have essential drama in them and of which we learned in our youth, that Rufus Stone is the most popular spot in the whole Forest area for visitors. Mark Ash alone can be said to compete with it.

The tragedy of the Red King is, perhaps, the earliest note of drama which comes before the child-mind, since the teaching of history in late Victorian times always began with the Conqueror. And the story that most people absorbed at a tender age, that the Rufus fell from wounds received while hunting in the Forest ; that the fatal archer was the Norman Knight, Sir Walter Tyrrel ; that the arrow glanced from a tree into the breast of the King, and that the body was taken to Winchester for burial by a homely charcoal-burner, has been finally and irrevocably confirmed to their satisfaction by the inscription on the stone at Canterton. That, for most people, has settled it. The printed word is final, and that which is graven on stone or iron satisfies the doubts of nearly all.

The stone, which was set up by Lord de la Warr when he was Master Keeper at Boldrewood Lodge and the glen at Canterton was within his bailiwick, is now carefully encased in iron for its preservation, because

of the inveterate habit of the tourist of inscribing " his mark " with a knife upon historic memorials of every kind. It sets out the story baldly enough ; without any detail at all, except that the stone stood on the identical spot occupied by the oak on which the arrow glanced, and that the stone was set up by Lord de la Warr, who had seen the tree, in order " that the spot where an event so memorable had happened might not hereafter be forgotten." Further, because of the mutilation, a more durable memorial was substituted in 1841 by " William Sturges Bourne, Warden."

Now John Lord de la Warr was, in addition to being a Forest enthusiast, a very admirable summary writer. More perhaps could not conveniently be inscribed upon the stone, but the matter was really not as simple as that. Behind it lies one of the great historical controversies. No two writers agree about it ; indeed, there can hardly be said to be unity as to whether the killing, accidental or of malice aforethought, happened at Canterton at all. Lady Cross, near Brockenhurst, and Fritham, have also been mentioned, and no better evidence can be adduced on this point than that of Lord de la Warr, who said he saw the tree. The captious will say that he only had hearsay evidence for it, but since the historians do not argue greatly upon this point, authenticity may fairly be claimed for Canterton.

Leland, the father of topographical science, and Camden, who was a very painstaking practitioner in the same field, both held that the death of the Red King took place at Througham, and that a Chapel was erected there to his memory. Gilpin always refused to accept that theory, though he thought it likely that Througham was Fritham.

Wise, the Forest historian, whose sixty-year-old work is the most complete, has analysed and dissected the evidence with scrupulous care. There are half a dozen

variations of the arrow story. One is that the King fell upon the arrow by accident ; others that it struck a deer, and a boar ; others are that the arrow was aimed at the King with murderous intent and struck nothing on the way ; others, again, that the flight was direct but accidental.

There is evidence that Sir Walter Tyrrel denied having despatched the fatal arrow, but there is also the fact that he decided upon immediate flight, crossing the Avon at Avon Tyrrel, on the way to the coast and his native Normandy.

That which followed the death of Rufus is familiar in broad outline to even the children. The finding of the body in the glen by the charcoal-burner ; his decision to bear it to Winchester, and its final unhonoured burial, belong to the early memories of every child. For them the other story of the stripping of the body and bearing it across a horse to the capital, which was really the much more probable, hardly exists.

And yet it is odd that the name of this humble and insignificant Forest dweller should be known when there is so much in the story which is confused and contradictory. Why should we be so certain that Purkiss was the man ? And why should he, a man who never left the Forest in all likelihood, bear a body which he might or might not have known was that of the King, all the way to Winchester, which to him would have been " foreign parts " ?

That at least is accepted, however, in the Forest, and the Purkiss' family, of whom there are still representatives in the central and northern Forest and elsewhere, make a point of claiming descent from the humble instrument of history who bore the same name.

I remember that the incident of the passage of the body through Romsey was enacted at the Romsey pageant, in celebration of the Abbey's thousandth

year some years ago (Sir Frank Benson producing), and then the part of the charcoal-burner was borne by a representative of the family, who was a well-known railway official, the cart used on that occasion being the familiar flat Forest cart which is used for bearing fern and peat.

The accounts of William of Malmesbury and others on the point of the actual killing seem to agree on the facts, though later commentators do not wholly accept them. One of the oldest versions is that a herd of deer was driven past the royal party, which had earlier in the day gathered at Brockenhurst, and had on the way to Canterton been quarrelling, and that the King, in his usual eager anger, cried to Tyrrel, "Shoot, you devil, shoot." Tyrrel aimed at a royal stag, but missed, as the King had previously done, the arrow reaching the King. It has been said that when Rufus was struck he groaned and asked for the Sacraments, but there was nobody to administer them before he died.

Let us just glance through the curtain of the years at the circumstances antecedent to the death of the King, not in the hope of elucidating them, for the chroniclers have made that impossible, but in order to show that there is barely sufficient justification for the "hunting field accident" version.

It was agreed that William the Red was neither a comely king, nor one to inspire the respect or affection either of his entourage or the common people. On the latter point Mr. George Dewar aptly says that while the Conqueror chastised the foresters and others with whips, Rufus chastised with scorpions.

Wise's summary of his character runs thus:

"Without any of his father's ability or power of statesmanship, he inherited all his vices, which he so improved that they became rather his own. For having no occupation for his mind, he sank more and more into licentiousness and lust.

Being lustful, he naturally became cruel; not, as his father was, on, at least, the plea of necessity, but that he might enjoy a cultivated pleasure in gloating over the sufferings of others. . . . His description reads rather like that of a fiend than of a man. Possessing enormous strength, he was small, thick-set, and ill-shaped, having an enormous stomach. His face was redder than his hair, and his eyes of two different colours."

Small wonder that the Princess Matilda fled to Romsey and took the veil rather than share the throne with such a man.

Small wonder either, that Fulchered, the Chrysostom of his time, should say: "The bow of God's vengeance is bent against the wicked. The arrow swift to wound is already drawn out of the quiver. Soon will the blow be struck, but the man who is wise to amend will avoid it."

It was hardly prophecy in all likelihood, though it is quite possible that the fulminations of the good Abbot of Shrewsbury were directed at the King, and may even have spurred Tyrrel to the deed. Another record shows that the plot against the King's person, if it existed in fact, was hatched in Normandy and that the flight of the knight was chiefly for the purpose of reporting the removal of a tyrant.

It is fairly evident that a rising against the King was within the contemplation of some of the strong men of Church and State, and that they were not averse from playing on the royal fears, since there is no doubt that Red William had a cowardly streak. There were six "revelations" of the wrath to come, as Wise shows. The King himself had a premonition of sanguinary death, dreaming on the night before that his own blood, flowing upward, obscured the sun.

There is a point to be noted here. William, aware of the state of public feeling, would be hardly likely either to speak of his dream, or to venture, as seems to have happened, into the Forest next day, alone and

unguarded. For, remember, there were other direct revelations. Wise has gathered them up. One of them has a point of resemblance to the King's sun-dream and perhaps was responsible for it. Mr. Rogers, who has summarized the lengthier Wise analysis, thus records it :

" A foreign monk staying at the Court, dreamed that he saw the King enter a church, seize the Crucifix, and attempt to tear the arms and legs off. The Image, after bearing the insult for some time, struck the King and felled him to the ground. On this fire and smoke gushed from the King's mouth, and veiled from the earth the brightness of the stars."

The monk told the King all about it, which was brave of him, and he received a gift for so doing.

Just before the start for the fatal hunt the King was informed that " one of the brethren " (the detail is noticeably vague) at Gloucester had dreamed a dream that he saw the Saviour and all the hosts of heaven grouped about the Throne. Then the Virgin, robed in light, threw Herself before the Christ, and, pleading for the English, begged also that the King be punished. The Saviour answered in the monkish dream, " You must be patient and wait. Due retribution will in time befall the wicked."

The Abbot of Cluny had a dream, too, in which the King was summoned before God, " and sentenced to damnation, and the King's death immediately followed."

There were other manifestations of the same sort, all more or less having a monastic origin, but they only make the pathway to truth murkier than ever to the modern mind. There is no doubt that the King was at war with the hierarchy—he had banished Anselm—no question either, that they wished him ill. Otherwise they would not have persistently dreamed about violent happenings in relation to the King.

It may be that they sought to win the King by fear

"RUFUS" STONE, NEAR MINSTEAD

to a better frame of mind ; perhaps that the banishment of Anselm explains their attitude ; but it does not seem to link them with anything that Tyrrel did, if, indeed, he acted with intent to kill.

The chroniclers have thrown up a veritable smoke-cloud about the whole business, probably because the bent of their minds would lead them to place great reliance on Divine manifestations, but they have made no contribution towards a reasonable elucidation of the facts. For most people the twists and turns of this royal tragedy, which may or may not have been the last act in a secret war about which contemporary records have very little to say, do not exist. The simple facts of the King's death are sufficient. But Wise believes that there was a definite conspiracy ; " that the prelates held the crozier in one hand and the battle-axe in the other."

It was a long-drawn-out conspiracy too. There were risings against William's rule in every part of the land except the south. There was active rebellion in the east and west and midlands, and another outbreak on the Welsh border. In the north the operation of Forest Law, which was harshly applied elsewhere than in the New Forest, caused rebellion, as did other circumstances in the King's lands in Normandy. Enemies were everywhere. And he must have known it.

The chroniclers may well have known more than they set down ; they were at pains with their stories of dreams and the like, to divert attention from the plots and conspiracies, and the fog which they called up not only obscured Tyrrel, but made it impossible for later investigators to piece the tangle together in such a way that the parts would fit. Wise thinks that Tyrrel's was not the hand, but that he was in the plot.

CHAPTER XVI

THE NORTHERN FOREST (*continued*)

The Great Plain—Its Relics—Sloden—The Field Archæologist's happiest Hunting-ground—The Moor of Corpses—Minstead—An Unchanged Village—Its Modern Outlook—The Women's Institutes—Minstead and its Manor—Famous Trees of the Forest.

UPON or near the great tableland—the top of the Forest—are not only some of the finest woods but also a vast graveyard of memorials of a well-storied past. The interest in this latter aspect of the plain lies in the circumstance that the land hereabouts is as nearly primeval as in any part of England. There may be isolated patches of woodland about the countryside which have never apparently changed at all since the dawn of history, but there is in no part of the country any considerable stretch in which the spirit of change has made so little impression.

The land is richer for one thing than it is in the sandy south, and that may be taken to mean that in the aforetime it supported a larger population. There is evidence on every hand that long before William I afforested at all, people lived and hunted, pursued their peaceful agriculture and fought all over this southern tableland.

For the field archæologist it is fascinating territory. There is not only the work of several experts of the first authority to be seen, but there is just the chance that hereabouts the evidence is still buried of a civiliza-

tion of which the experts know very little. Barrows and earthworks there may be out of sight beneath the thick undergrowth ; sites of buried civilizations in the very heart of the thick woods.

I remember being fascinated by the account which a distinguished field archæologist gave me of the effect upon his particular branch of science of the use of the aeroplane. It was not used in the Forest, but in another part of Hampshire where the buried treasures lie in even greater profusion. It was discovered that indications of a story beneath the soil, normally hidden from the human eye except as the result of rather speculative digging, was more or less laid bare from the air. Discoveries of the first importance were made in this way. But the method would not avail in the Forest.

I do not, however, propose to deal in precise detail with these matters. This is but a broad survey of the contour of the land, with such diversions as the historical interest of any portion may suggest. Distinguished archæologists like Mr. Wise and Mr. Heywood Sumner have ploughed deeply and most valuably, where I have perforce to skim the surface.

At the same time it will be appropriate to indicate what they have done. Those who have studied these things closely will know those fascinating chapters of Mr. Wise's book which deal with these matters. They will also be acquainted with Mr. Heywood Sumner's even more detailed and wonderful record, "The Earthworks of the New Forest," the record of his patient delving in every earthwork in the Forest area, and of his conclusions, based on wide learning, meticulous comparison, and lifelong study of the Forest which he has known for forty years.

But there will be many others who have not the leisure or the equipment for these high matters, and it is for these that this brief record of the buried years is written.

Mr. Sumner has excavated and written of earthworks all over the Forest, from Gorley, which is not far from Fordingbridge, to the coast near Lymington, but the hill country round about Sloden has been his richest hunting ground.

The barrows—at least some of them—give evidence of a civilization at least three thousand years old, the Bronze Age, while the excavations in the northern Forest in the neighbourhood of Crock Hill have revealed pottery in great profusion belonging to Roman times.

There is, according to Mr. Sumner, little evidence of early British occupation in the form of village sites, and apart from the pottery, indicating, possibly, a factory site, there are none too frequent Roman earthworks. There are bits of a Roman road here and there, which is natural in a county which has so many traces of the Roman occupation at Clausentum, Winchester and Silchester, but no example of a buried Roman villa.

At Fritham there are the remains of what must have been a great graveyard—barrows close together, containing calcined bones and much charcoal.

These small barrows, richly suggestive as they would be to the trained eye, would be easily missed by the casual visitor. But the tumuli, of which there are so many examples all over the Forest, may be easily seen, and about some of them local legends have been built.

There are examples at Sway in the southern Forest, which Warner thought might be early British, or at least placed there at the time that the early Britons were at war with the invading Saxons under Cerdic. In some barrows near Setley Wood, there were remains which may have been those of chieftains, since, as Warner showed, " considerable labour and care have been exerted in their formation." This observer was

rather impressed with the idea that hereabouts were buried those who fell in a great battle between the Celts and the Saxons, but that seemed to Wise to be "a large generalization which required far stronger evidence than could at present be produced." Mr. Sumner has made the point, too, that elaborate burial, such as is suggested by the calcined bones, the charcoal and other finds, would rather belong to the spacious times of peace than the hurry of war.

Ampress, near Lymington, investigated by all the archæologists quoted, was regarded by Wise as a corruption of Ambrosius, the Roman general's name, but Mr. Sumner has called it a Seafarer's Camp.

Latchmoor, which sounds pleasant enough as a name, stands really for "the moor of corpses," which suggests either that it was a place of common burial, or else that Warner was right, and that there was, in fact, a big battle thereabouts in the very dawn of English history. Other large barrows in the neighbourhood of Dibden indicate that large numbers of people were buried beneath.

In nearly all these burial-places the same evidence has been turned up—charcoal in plenty, bones, calcined occasionally, and in a few cases urns which once contained remains.

In his investigations at Bratley, where also Mr. Heywood Sumner delved with great effect, Wise found, in addition to layers of charcoal, stones which he thought were used in slings as weapons of offence, more calcined bones and an urn, all of them, he thought, of much earlier date than the Roman invasion.

The peculiarity was the large quantity of charcoal, which he thought was some justification for the theory that slaves or prisoners were burnt at the same time as the chieftains, as part of the elaborate ritual of burial; that there was some element of the sacrificial in them.

Very many of these barrows can scarcely be seen, by the untrained eye, even when they lie upon the open heath, since they look, so many of them, just like trivial humps on the surface of already uneven ground. But here and there they rise, as tumuli, into quite considerable knolls, obviously artificial because of their perfection of form. The Black Bar barrow, which was one of these big burial-places, had a circumference of 400 yards, and its height was 40 feet.

On the whole it seems to be the more likely that the northern area on the plain of Sloden was the more considerable settlement. The soil there is richer. Indeed, there has been doubt expressed as to whether the southern Forest could have supported any large number of people at all, either in respect of the hunting or agricultural pursuits. There may have been great gatherings there for the purposes of defence, but the probabilities point to the correctness of the theory held by many geologists, that in the earliest days of which there is any evidence at all (and, of course, no contemporary records) the Isle of Wight was a part of the mainland, and that the Solent was a great river which at one time washed its way through the shingle bank to the Channel.

Minstead, which has already been referred to in connection with its quaintly named inn, is one of the most delightful of all the Forest villages. It lies remote from the railway in the very heart of the thickest part of the Forest, between the northern and southern plains, and as it has not had the opportunity of any kind of development, a word which has sometimes an unpleasant connotation, it has not the desire for change.

Of this there has, indeed, been singularly little. There is no reason why there should be. Just as the railway has left it alone, so has the high road.

Therefore, it dreams and dreams beside its jolly little river, amid its orchards, which are famous. And yet it is not a dull place in these modern days ; not in the very least. Small and unchanging in the changing years, and lying only three miles from Lyndhurst and the great highway to the sea, it has a most delightfully vigorous public spirit, the fruit of the happiest kind of co-operation between those who make the Forest their home because they love it and can afford to choose, and those who have to live where they can earn a living in the way they know best.

But don't get the impression that Minstead is a place where the patriarchal spirit survives. " Squire " has, it is true, certain privileges which nobody else in the Forest enjoys, but for all that Minstead has a very modern outlook. It possesses one of the pleasantest and best equipped of village halls in its own or any other county, governed in the interests of everybody in the place by a body which has to earn its authority in the most democratic way—at the polling booth. It is done that way, not only that there should be something approaching proportional representation, but in order that the people shall see how the electoral principle works, and what it is like in its detail.

The village hall is the centre of everything, and that is the sort of thing which matters enormously in village life, difficult as it may be for the townsman to understand. A hall, easily get-at-able, well lit, well warmed, and having not exactly a canteen, but a big boiler and all the other appurtenances for social life, just makes the whole difference. Ten, twenty years ago, people in the villages had to use the schoolroom for every sort of social purpose, and there was always the suggestion that it wasn't a home, the fruit of memory, or the hint that " the place had to be got ready for to-morrow." But the Village Hall,

which isn't privately owned and therefore not run for profit, is the finest solvent of village asperities.

That is the jolly kind of Village Hall which Minstead owns and uses for every sort of communal purpose. The Women's Institute meets there, and so do all the other organizations with which a place which rather prides itself upon the vigour of its parochial life, is equipped.

Here, as, indeed, in all the villages of the Forest, the Women's Institutes are vital, living organisms which have changed the whole atmosphere of village life. There is no single village in the Forest which is unprovided with a Women's Institute, and there are indeed more of them in Hampshire than in any other county, nearly 160, in fact. They are grouped together in federations and groups, a contrivance of organization which provides variety as well as a healthy rivalry, and in each of them there is the same happy democratic touch.

In the Women's Institutes the woman who has mastered a home industry, glove-making, basket-making or what not, and can teach the others, is the woman who counts. Somehow they fall into the jobs which each can do best. At Minstead a Countess plays the accompaniments regularly, and is glad to help in that way, and Minstead people are proud to have her assistance, not because she is a Countess, but because she is a superlative pianist.

You will never understand modern village life in the Forest or anywhere else, unless you grasp what the Women's Institute does, and is, and may be.

If I may tear myself away for a moment from leafy Minstead, I should like to say more about the influence of the Women's Institutes in the building up of contentment, in the breaking down of artificial lines in the English village, and in giving to each a rather valuable and inspiring kind of local pride.

At Boldre there is a Village Hall which probably would not have come into existence at all but for the Women's Institute. It is used as a village club by everybody, when it is not used by the village collectively for some purpose which is entertaining or mildly educational. In the winter in Boldre and Minstead and their kin, the moonlit nights are waited for with yearning, because those are the dance evenings and the lecture evenings, when the dwellers on the outskirts can come in and make common cause with those who live within easy reach of the village green.

Somehow these bright blooms in the communal garden of the English countryside have their greatest vigour in the more remote places. Minstead, Boldre and Fawley, to mention three Forest villages which are difficult of access, have been provided for for years. Lyndhurst, which has just a tinge of urban feeling, did not follow until quite lately, when its Institute jumped into full growth in a month. Totton, which is nearer still to a big town, and which is itself a little one with town instincts, hasn't one at all.

I have wandered from Minstead, but only to show the ramifications of an institution of which Minstead provides as characteristic an example as any.

Minstead was one of several manors cut out of the Forest, Beaulieu, Brockenhurst, and Exbury being other well-known examples, and it was held, as these others were, on a Royal Grant. In Minstead's case the grant was to Malf from Edward the Confessor, and Malf was the name from which Malwood was derived.

Several special privileges were conferred upon the Lords of Minstead at different times, all of which used to be very jealously guarded.

One right which was claimed in the early days and duly conceded, was that the lords of the manor of Minstead should appoint their own woodward, who would, however, serve the King as well, in guarding

grew in the Forest was that described in the Bath Society's papers, which was quoted by Gilpin and serves to show how dependent the Navy was in the days of the wooden walls on the well-grown Forest oaks. This tree, cut down in 1758, had branches nearly forty feet each way.

"Its head was all knees and crooks, aptly suited to naval purposes; its bole or shaft was short, not exceeding twenty feet in length, but it was full six feet in diameter at the top and perfectly sound. It was felled in an unusual manner for the preservation of its crooks, which were cut off one by one, whilst the tree was standing, and lowered by tackles to prevent them breaking."

In order to save a particularly large and valuable bough a bed of faggots—some hundreds were used—was made to catch it as it fell. Even so, half the bough was so heavy as to crush a timber carriage to pieces, and a special carriage had to be sent from Portsmouth to convey it to the dockyard. The record quoted shows that this tree was bought in the first instance for £40. The next purchaser gave £100 for it and he made a hundred per cent profit out of his purchase. "The breadth of the tree across, near the ground, was twelve feet, and it had three hundred rings of annual growth."

A curiosity of the Forest is that the elm is almost a stranger. Gilpin says nothing at all about the species, and Wise is silent too. Rogers speaks of a total absence of elms, but found it necessary to correct that impression afterwards, for he found one in Ocknell enclosure, and five on Pilley Green, which latter is not within the Forest at all now.

Burley way, in the western Forest, the moor country, are the "Twelve Apostles"—the Foresters of old time had the most arresting way of fitting effective names to the conspicuous objects of their countryside—mighty oaks which are beginning to fail, and

have to be stayed—those which remain—by iron bands, an indignity to the giants of the Forest which affronts me every time I think about it.

The same knack of neat naming has given character and a place in Forest tradition to " The Naked Man." It is but a bit of a tree, blasted long years ago, near Wilverley, on the road from Brockenhurst to Burley, but its bare arm points mutely to heaven, and in its desolation and impotence upon the lonely heath one sees a certain fitness.

Why, I wonder, should a stump win a name at all? It doesn't happen in the other Forests. Perhaps it is because the Foresters are able in their minds to give an individuality to the trees which are their friends. It isn't easy to " get the idea across," but every Forester feels that way about those trees which stand out in especial lordliness from among their fellows. They *are* friends.

There are several others which need to be mentioned, and none more famous than the Cadenham Oak at Cadnam, right on the other side of the Forest, near the road from Southampton, which is supposed to bud either on Christmas Eve or on old Christmas Day. The story varies, or more probably the date varies. Wise thought it not unlikely that a few buds did sometimes show themselves about that time, having regard to its situation, and it has been hinted by much less grave authorities, that the meagre suggestion of bud which has been seen has either been placed there by artificial means or that auto-suggestion and strong beer have helped.

Gilpin took a lot of trouble to investigate the matter.

" I engaged one Michael Lawrence," he said, " to send me some of the leaves as soon as they should appear. The man, who had not the least doubt about the matter, kept his word and sent me several twigs, on the morning of the fifth of January, 1782, a few hours after they had been gathered.

The leaves were fairly expanded and about an inch in length. From some of the buds two leaves had unsheathed themselves, but in general only one. . . . I sent some of the leaves to one of the ablest botanists we have, Mr. Lightfoot, author of the 'Flora Scotica,' and was in hopes of hearing something satisfactory on the subject. But he is one of those philosophers who is not ashamed of ignorance where attempts at knowledge are mere conjecture. He assured me that neither could he account for it in any way, nor did he know of any other instance of premature vegetation, except the Glastonbury Thorn."

In the "Salisbury Journal" of January 10, 1786, it was stated that a lady—

"attentively curious in everything relative to art or nature, made a journey to Cadenham on Monday, the third instant, purposely to enquire on the spot about the production of this famous tree. On her arrival near it, the usual guide was ready to attend her, but on his being desired to climb the oak and to search whether there were then any leaves on it, he said it would be to no purpose, but that if she would come on the Wednesday following (Christmas Day) she might certainly see thousands. However, he was prevailed on to ascend, and on the first branch which he gathered appeared several fair new leaves, fresh sprouted from the buds and nearly an inch and a half in length. It may be imagined that the guide was more amazed at this premature production than the lady; for so strong was his belief in the truth of the whole tradition that he would have pledged his life that not a leaf was to have been discovered on any part of the tree before the usual hour."

"In some years," went on the chronicler of this occasion, "there is no doubt but that this oak may show its first leaves on Christmas morning as probably as on a few days before, and perhaps this was the case in the last year, when a gentleman of this neighbourhood, a nice and critical observer, strictly examined the branches not only on the Christmas morn, but also on the day prior to it. On the first day not a leaf was to be found, but on the following every branch had its complement, though they were then but just shooting from the buds, none of them being more than a quarter inch long. The latter part of the story may easily be credited, that no leaves are to be seen on it after Christmas Day, as

large parties yearly assemble about the oak on that morning, and regularly strip every appearance of a leaf from it."

Then there are the very famous yews of Sloden, none of which have ever been named, and a mighty specimen at Brockenhurst, eighteen feet in girth. There, too, is a mighty oak, now dead, which measured twenty-five feet round the bole.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WESTERN FOREST

The Western Forest and the Avon Valley—Fordingbridge—The River Villages—A Silent Revolution—The Borderland of three Counties—Foresters by adoption—The Tragedy of Moyles Court—An Epic of Sacrifice—The Priory which belonged to Eton—Ringwood—Its mellow Charm—Somerley—The Moorlands which Scott loved—Burley and its famous "Keepers"—A Bailiwick outside Forest law—Breamore Maze.

PRESENTLY the hill country of the Northern Forest merges into the very pleasant valley of the Avon, a widespread prospect of meadows and steadings, little villages beside the river, and small towns with a vigorous local life. There is no more lonely place than these Forest hills and woods where, as on the southern plain, the traveller may go for miles without seeing a house; and the contrast is very delightful.

From Gorley Hill the whole of the Forest's edge and the river valley is unfolded. The prospect ranges the valley of the Avon from Salisbury to Christchurch, with the spire of the Cathedral pointing its graceful finger to heaven, and the green downs beyond. On the other side, Hengistbury Head beyond the river-mouth, and even, across the Bay, to Old Harry, there is a range and variety of scene which is unmatched.

Fordingbridge, outside the Forest except in a political sense, but having, like the other small towns, a close community of interest, has a quiet charm which

makes itself felt at once. Outwardly perhaps a kind of sleepy hollow, it does not deserve the complacent pity which the town-dweller is sometimes, on passing through, tempted to bestow upon it. For, as is the case with these other old towns of the borderland, there is the pleasantest kind of social life: and evidence of small but thriving industry as well. Fordingbridge still produces sail-cloth and canvas, and, in addition, there is a considerable factory for patent foods. It is not a borough like Romsey or Lymington, but it has all the instincts of a small town.

As at most of the small towns and villages of the peaceful Avon Valley, remote even in the days of motor touring on a scale undreamed of even five years ago, the fishing is greatly sought after, and for all the exclusiveness of it, and the necessary limitation of numbers of those who may thresh any given stretch of water, a considerable body of people are interested in it, since even fishermen require sustenance as well as a certain measure of comfort in which to fight their battles with the " big 'uns " over again.

But it is the motorists who provide the little extra bustle and prosperity to the villages which dot the Avon Valley. The man with a mechanical instinct, a little spare time, and the florid metal-work signs of the petrol companies, has set himself up in every village in waiting for the tourist in trouble. Sometimes he calls his business—which began by hiring out decrepit bicycles on Saturday afternoons and attending to the small repairs of the lazy—a garage, but in the villages he is usually content to nail up gaudy tinwork proclaiming the merits of particular motor spirit, and to hope that any jobs which may come his way will not be beyond his capacity.

There is a certain quaint similarity in the river villages. About them all are the spreading fields, the little groupings of woodland, the church tower, varying

in form, generally peeping above the trees. In the Forest the almost universal plan was to place the churches on high ground so that they could be a landmark and a beacon, but in the villages of the wide valley on the other side of the Western hills it was not necessary. Cosiness of situation was what the early builders sought.

Ibsley, half-way between Fordingbridge and Ringwood, is a delightful little place, and over the way is Harbridge, with Ellingham, many storied, nearer to Ringwood. To them all Ringwood is the natural centre, because of the market and the shops, and thither the people go much more than they used, because the motor omnibus has worked a silent revolution in the countryside.

In all the villages of this borderland of three counties, this has happened. The railway runs a little awkwardly for all of them. The main line cuts straight through the Forest to the sea and helps the valley villages very little. Once, indeed, the main line ran through Ringwood, but now a shorter way exists, and the Ringwood line has become a secondary affair. Indeed, to get from, say, Southampton to Fordingbridge by rail, involves a journey first to Salisbury, right away from the objective, and then a return towards the coast, an experience which will absorb hours of time.

The motor-'bus has changed it all. There are services linking all the Forest and Valley villages to their natural centres, and cross services too. On any of the main roads you may see groups of people " waiting for the 'bus," with the certainty that its timing will be nearly as precise as that of the railway. Going to " the town " is not an occasional adventure, but something to be undertaken almost casually. It has come about so gradually as to be almost unnoticed, but, like the Women's Institutes, it is changing the whole

face of things on the countryside, and making for a greater contentment in every way.

It has had another effect. Dwellers in the towns are beginning to become Foresters by adoption. Some of the villages of the margins are filling up with these. Their villas strike a curious note among the woodland, but the new life is brisk and profitable for everybody.

But I was talking of Ellingham, when these unnoticed changes in English rural life, so important in their reactions, so interesting as a means of bringing the gap between town and country, which is a matter of very real importance, led me astray—of Ellingham and its drama.

The story of Lady Alicia Lisle, of Moyles Court, which lies, by the way, just on the margin of the Forest, is one of the epics of sacrifice. It is the most poignant of all the tragedies and the broken lives which Judge Jeffreys left behind him when he raged back and forth throughout southern and western England, slaking his insensate hate in the Bloody Assize.

The Lady Alicia lived on the fringe of the hates and terror which were the unhappy influences of the Monmouth rebellion, but she was a woman, pitiful before all else, and when the two fugitives from Sedgmoor fight, drifting like chaff before the winnowing of the King's men, came to Moyles Court, knowing, perhaps, the big heart of the châtelaine, the door was opened to them. The Lady Alicia saw only their plight; regarded their hunger as of greater moment than their mistaken adherence to a lost cause, and gave them the succour of the priest's hole.

But their enemies were more closely upon their heels than either they or the pitiful Lady Alicia knew. Their presence within the house was suspected if not actually known. They may, indeed, have been tracked; it is not an impossibility, remembering the terror and

the betrayals which were the fruit of terror, that they were headed that way, and permitted first to make their plea for sanctuary.

At all events there was a search, and Hicks and Nelthorpe were revealed. Treachery was in all likelihood the explanation, for priest's holes and hiding-places in houses like Moyles Court generally managed to retain their secrets until danger was overpast. The Lady Alicia, treated with a measure of contumely which scorches us with shame, knowing as we do what human kind is capable of in the stress of war, was hailed before the Black Judge. Jeffreys constituted himself counsel for the prosecution as well as Judge. He bullied the jury until they felt that they, too, were on trial for their lives, and that a verdict favourable to the accused would very conceivably place them in peril. To the meanest intelligence the act of the accused was one of pure charity; had the fugitives been King's men she would most likely have acted in the same way.

But with the scales of justice thus weighted with venom, hardness of heart and something infinitely worse than uncharitableness, it was not surprising that Lady Alicia was unable to prove that her act, which she admitted, was one of pity. It was one of those cases in which the result was a foregone conclusion.

The awful savagery of her sentence, to be burned alive, following the final indignity of being drawn upon a hurdle to the place of execution, was lightened in part, and death, a merciful thing, came to her in the Market Place at Winchester by the axe. She was buried at Ellingham in a stone tomb near the door in 1685.

Ellingham was in still earlier days the site of a priory which Henry VI gave to Eton, and in the Church is a very famous picture of "The Last Judgment" by the

Flemish master, Golzius, which was presented by Admiral Lord Windsor, having been brought by him from a church at Cadiz.

Ringwood was another of the old Hampshire towns which centred round several flourishing industries, some of which still remain. It is not a chartered borough like some of the other border towns which are no larger and which certainly have not a longer history, for Ringwood thrived in Saxon days, and had a great fair and market comparable almost to those of St. Giles at Winchester or Weyhill. There were mills there, and breweries, rather famous these, and a manufacture of Ringwood gloves which matters considerably less than it did. And there are some very delightful old houses, mellow-bricked and bow-fronted, with much shining brass-work about the stout old doors; neat expanses of shaven lawns in front, and sweet-smelling old walled gardens at the rear.

It is a matter of taste, of course, but I always feel wistful about those old houses, close to the main streets of these mellowed towns; that and a little envious. Much rather would I live in them—in spite of the unexpected steps, in spite of the inconvenience of having rooms leading out of one another, in spite of the old wrought-iron grates and their frightful appetite for coal and logs—than in the stucco and red villas of our time which, lighter and airier, and infinitely more convenient, are going up outside the towns of southern Hampshire and elsewhere.

Ringwood has lived an uneventful but not unprosperous life—the polished brass and well-kept flower-beds are evidence of that—but nothing has ever happened there which changed the stream of Hampshire history. Monmouth was certainly detained there after his capture over the Dorset border; and

OLD COTTAGES AT RINGWOOD

there also he wrote the letter signing away his pretensions and his hopes. It is, and has been for a long time, a sort of civic backwater, but a pleasant one for all that, and many visitors come that way for the sake of a tussle with the stout pike of the Avon or for the thrill of a morning on the marshes, or because the dun moors of the Forest's edge are within easy reach.

Among the beautiful homes of this pleasant land none is more attractive than Somerley, the Earl of Normanton's seat, a house of splendid proportions. The pictures within are said to comprise one of the finest private collections in England. There is a Reynolds there, "Seven Cardinal Virtues," which is valued at £80,000. A very eminent critic wrote of the Somerley pictures: "No one who has not seen this gallery can judge of the powers of the great English master in their full extent." At Somerley there is a "Nelson" and a "Mrs. Siddons" by the same hand, and a very wonderful Rubens; "The Young Lioness at Play." Romney, Greuze, Gainsborough, Titian, Teniers and Lawrence are among the other old masters whose work is to be found at Somerley, but they are fairly familiar to those who have close acquaintance with these matters because they have frequently been on exhibition, sometimes at the winter season at Burlington House. Titian is represented by "Venus and Adonis."

Of the English painters of the eighteenth century there are many examples. "Lady Mendip" and the "Cottage Door" are the Gainsboroughs at Somerley. Romney's "Lady Hamilton at the Spinning Wheel" was once there, and there are good examples of the work of Morland and Hogarth also.

But the Reynolds are the real treasures. Indeed, many of the great homes of southern Hampshire have or have had some of the best of the Reynolds pictures

at various times, for Sir Joshua was, in part at least, a Hampshire man, being a godson and nephew of the Rev. Joshua Reynolds, who was Rector of Stoke Charity, just the other side of Winchester. There used to be some wonderful pictures of his at Cams Hall, near Fareham, and other houses of this happy neighbourhood whose walls were once thus adorned, and may be still, are Broadlands, the Ashley home, Stratton, Lord Northbrook's place; The Grange at Alresford, where Lord Ashburton lives; Heron Court, Lord Malmesbury's home; and Sydney Lodge, " over against " the Forest on the other side of Southampton Water at Hamble, the home of Lord Hardwicke.

The Agar family, of which the Earl of Normanton is the head, was, in its ennobled sense, founded by a former Archbishop of Dublin.

But the bright moorlands outside Ringwood, golden or purple or brown according to the season, with the massed trees upon the skyline, and the racing clouds overhead, draw me again. Right over the hills, not high but infinitely wild-looking—was this the range of brown knolls which soothed the nostalgia of Scott for his native moors where he was staying nearer the coast for a season of work and Forest wandering ?—lies Burley, as charmingly placed, I think, as any of the Forest villages.

On either side it provides that which is most attractive to the traveller, the element of surprise. From the Ringwood approach you never suspect that the deep lanes which succeed the exhilarating moor will yield a lonely village, half old, half new, but very delightfully blended, while from the Holmesley side, across the moor which has not the same variety, the road suddenly drops through the tunnel of the great trees right upon it.

Burley resembles Brockenhurst in this respect that it has a vogue as a place of residence for the leisured

who have also the hunger for that peace of soul to which trees and natural growth secretly minister. They may not be always conscious of it, but it is a necessity to them just as the downland is to the man who has within him the passion for the sweeping winds; just as some other natures crave the sea.

That is why, amid the timbered houses, the quiet country homes of dead generations, there are also "new" places, settling down into a pleasant middle-age, or trying not to appear too garish, if they are in their fresh red and white youth, amid the rest.

Burley was always a little "different." It belongs to the Forest in spirit and in fact, but it liked, at one time, to show a certain independence. Once it was the head-quarters of one of the Walks; a Master Keeper lived there in a degree of state which exceeded all the others in glory. The Dukes of Bolton, Keepers of Burley and Holmesley, held practically hereditary office, and at times they forgot that they lived on the King's land, and owed a duty to the Sovereign in respect of it. "They cultivated," says the Hon. Gerald Lascelles in his book "Thirty-five Years in the New Forest," "a forest of their own; they seemed to exercise all Forestal rights." Thus they appointed their own Keepers, and gave above their own names, more or less as of right, the warrants to kill deer, and to cut wood.

Sometimes this was resented; sometimes central authority sought to bring home to the reigning Dukes that theirs was but a sort of deputy suzerainty, and once at least there was a big row about it. This was in 1757, when the Keepers of the Crown took leave to point out that the killing of buck under a ducal warrant was a use of power which could not be permitted. It was not a dispute between legal theorists; they did not write to one another long epistles in which the

juridical authorities were used as missiles. They, the rival Keepers—for the Duke of Bolton knew nothing of it till afterwards—just "went for" one another in the forest way, and one of them, unhappily, lost his life. In the trial for murder which followed, a manslaughter verdict was returned.

The expectation was that the trial would settle the question of the ducal claims one way or the other, but the Court refused to pronounce at all on the question of right, and the effect of that decision, and of the circumstance that nobody took whatever steps there were available to have a somewhat anomalous situation straightened out, was that the Duke of Bolton of that particular day continued to do pretty much as he chose within his own bailiwick, making his own appointments and disposing of the beasts of the field, if not precisely of the fowls of the air, as seemed good to him. He did not permit his keepers, Mr. Lascelles records, to attend the Forest Courts, and his whole domain was thus practically outside Forest law.

Indeed, when at long last an attempt was made to regularize a position which had been steadily going astray for a good many years, it was found convenient, not to put too fine a point on it, to buy out the rights of the family for a lump sum. The house in which the Dukes of Bolton maintained an estate which was unsurpassed in days when an almost feudal condition prevailed throughout the Forest, was pulled down.

There has been a considerable cutting down of the great woods which in the aforetime compassed Burley round about, but there are still some mighty oaks in Old Burley. The Twelve Apostles—now so sadly reduced—have already been referred to, and there are some very ancient yews. The beeches are fewer, but there are some great collections of hollies, as at

Thorny Hill, and not far away in Vinney Ridge, famous for its heronry.

All about Burley Beacon, which is to the south-west, are earthworks, some of which still bear suggestive names, indicating either that a considerable population lived thereabouts in the very dawn of history, though the quality of the soil and its probable productiveness is rather against this, or that the area was, as Wise hints, a great battlefield.

This latter theory has some evidence to support it. Charford is not very far away, nearer Fordingbridge, and it was there that the Saxons, seeking a place in the sun and having marched across the Forest, finally met the defending Britons and defeated them severely. This smiling valley thus became, as well as a battle-ground, the virtual foundation of the West Saxon kingdom, which for many years thereafter was the corner-stone of England.

And while in the neighbourhood of Fordingbridge let us look at Rockbourne, where there was once, it is said, a leper hospital, though the historians are not certain about it, and where Sir John Cooper, father of the first Earl of Shaftesbury, lived. There, too, lived another interesting personality, an Empire builder, whose deeds are commemorated by the pillar which has been erected in the grounds of West Park. They were rather fond of this method of bestowing praise upon fighters in Hampshire. There is the Burrard obelisk at Walhampton, to which reference has already been made. That was set up by the admirers of a great sailor by the people of his own neighbourhood. In the case of the Coote pillar at West Park, the tribute was erected by John Company in respect of the feats of Sir Eyre Coote, who captured Pondicherry from the French, and in other ways played a very considerable part in the building up of the Indian Empire. Sir Eyre Coote was buried at

Rockbourne, his family home, but he actually died in India, which he served so well.

Breamore, a border village, is interesting too. It is a downland place in part and has a maze on the top of the down which bears the same name, rather like that at Winchester on St. Catherine's Hill. It is supposed to have been cut long years ago by the canons of the Austinian Priory which was formerly there. The maze remains, but of the priory there are but the tiniest traces. The priory was founded in the twelfth century by Baldwin, first Earl of Devon.

Further down Avon bank is Sopley, a river village of very notable beauty, with a very interesting church, and its memories of Tyrrel, who forded the Avon somewhere in the neighbourhood and had his horse shod, or more exactly had the shoes of the animal reversed. In respect of this a fine is still paid by the owner of the smithy to the Crown, or rather it was a few years ago. It is just possible that a modern smith might refuse to accept responsibility for all time for the sins of not only his remote ancestors but also his predecessors in title. It is one of the things which would never be enforceable in law.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SOUTHERN BORDERLAND

The Approaches to Christchurch — Wonderful modern "Carpet" Roads—The Hampshire Riviera—The Seven Ages of Home-making—The Legend of the Priory—Political History—The Queen of the Hampshire Littoral.

THE approach to Christchurch is interesting, however it is made. From the Forest's edge the road drops down rapidly towards the flat land by the river valley through typical English scenery—wheatlands, roots, a coppice or two, occasional houses with all sorts of incongruities of situation or eccentricities of architecture—into a little old town which somehow looks Georgian and isn't. Here and there are the supremely harsh lines of the modern bungalow, the only concern in the building of which seems to have been an economy in the brickmaker's bill. Occasionally a cottage, generally with an overgrown garden, beflowered with wistaria, and, less frequently, the shining white gates of those modern, small, country houses which grow up within a ten-mile radius of the boundaries of all large towns. Bournemouth is very close at hand.

The road to Christchurch through the valley villages which has just been described is less sophisticated. The highway hasn't been levelled and carpeted—yes, that is the appropriate word—with a material which approximates to a wide rubber band, as is the case with the great trunk road to the sea, which is really

one of the most notable in southern England. Rather does it wander where it listeth. The awkward corners, which just happened when road-making was a more or less casual business, are still there. The ditches widen out occasionally into reedy spaces which have become duck-ponds: hedging and ditching is not so diligently practised as on the main road, but it is all very charming nevertheless.

The road from Bournemouth, on the other hand, along which the trams rattle, has not quite made up its mind as to its future. One may guess that it was, forty or fifty years ago, a leafy lane, twisting and turning unhurriedly over occasional bridges and between the boundaries of pleasant country houses—a sort of lovers' walk, to use a form of description which everybody will understand. Now it is mostly built upon. There is the hand of the mid-Victorian builder all over it—in patches. Rows of houses all alike, with a pocket-handkerchief of garden in front, and a longish tunnel of garden behind; and in between a bit of scrub, with a few pines here and there. Sometimes there is a little patch on which an architect with a more modern eye has sought to employ the pines as foreground or background to a tasteful house. There are tennis lawns and the tamarisk-like stuff—which isn't the real thing—which sometimes grows upon these queer dunes which have in some curious way elevated themselves on top of the cliffs. They belong to the time when Bournemouth had finally given up the ambition to become the resort of the holiday crowd which only thinks in terms of bedrooms at so much per week, and had cultivated the ambition to attract permanent residents of leisure and taste to this Hampshire Riviera of which it is the queen.

Truly the intervening space between Bournemouth and Christchurch is full of curiosity for the student of social conditions, because all the seven ages of Neo-

Georgian and Victorian house-making are to be found jostling one another, and apologizing, it almost seems, for the propinquity.

Bournemouth, on the one side, has reached a kind of opulent beauty, a luxurious spaciousness which is not without its appeal to the senses, while Christchurch has, apparently, decided once for all to grow old, graciously content, if the image be understood, with a lavender silk dress and primly braided grey hair. Bournemouth may have more friends, but Christchurch has many of discernment who value the placid old age of the place and its general unpretentiousness. It seems to indicate that it doesn't want a place in the sun, but is content with the sweetness of its old gardens, and the very plainness of its outward aspect, knowing that the great grey Priory which broods over it helps to the making of a picture which people will keep for ever in their minds, when the memories of the seaside resorts, whatever their characteristics, become a jumble.

If Christchurch has any regret, I sometimes think, it is that the high road to Bournemouth, an artery which is always throbbing, passes right through it, making for restlessness, but that circumstance does not seem to affect it very greatly. It hasn't changed much, and there are very few places in the Forest or elsewhere, for that matter, which have not been changed out of recognition because they were on the line of a great main road.

But before I describe Christchurch as it deserves to be described, I want to recall two pictures which are photographed upon my mind as being characteristic of the place : a day in autumn, a day of fleecy clouds ; sun-dappled fields and russet trees ; the panorama of the lower river as seen from the kind of grey stone bridge which is not built in these days, and in the foreground, the ruins of the old Norman house on its knoll

and immediately behind it the grey Priory. Along its roof-line and upon every one of its turrets were the gathered swallows, thousands of them, waiting for the signal for flight to the warmer lands of the South. There was not a foot's space untenanted along that long roof, for immediately there was a break others came wheeling to the rendezvous from all points of the compass. Occasionally the scouts skimmed along and about the gathered armies. Black spots in the far distance became flying squadrons of more swallows, and presently, company by company, the whole army leaped into the sky, winging away across the Solent towards the Island, and straight, by way of St. Catherine's, to the South. It happens every year. The Priory is the trysting-place, as regularly as the seasons come round.

The other picture has a different quality. It concerns the river life. The Avon and the Stour make, by their meeting, a wide-spreading though shallow estuary. There is no considerable depth of water there, and if in the remote past Christchurch ever had hopes of a future as a port—as at different times most of the wide harbours of the South have cherished—they have departed long since. But it is a wonderful playground for the river yachtsmen who only seek to drift along by sedgy banks with the lush meadows beyond. One has the quaintest vision of these little sloop-rigged craft, with open cockpit, and hardly bigger than a dinghy, across the meadows. From a distance the luxuriant surroundings of these tributary streams hide the water altogether, and all that can be seen is the white wide spear of the sail, drifting gently, as it seems, along the meadow. It strikes oddly upon the eye which is not familiar with the lay of the countryside, for it is the only place in the South where this resemblance to the Broads exists.

Perhaps this almost shrinking modesty of Christ-

church is the more noticeable because of the contrast with Bournemouth, which has none of the special distinction of the violet, albeit uniquely beautiful in so many other respects. Its town hall is surely the most humble of any in England; its plain-fronted houses, except where the modern builder has had his way with stucco-work and the garish red bricks which seem peculiar to this part of the country, the very plainest. This severity of line and humility of pose is over the place like a veil, but it all throws up the glory of the Priory lying in the meadows by the river's brim.

And yet Christchurch's story is of the very stuff of English history. Perhaps its situation on the coast marked it out as a place where high adventure might be sought, by those who, in the dawn of history, coveted the fair land of Wessex. Hengist, at all events, is supposed to have made at least one of his landings there, and there was other fighting there long before Domesday, between Ethelwold and Edward the Elder. Thuinham was its Domesday name, but as soon as the Augustinians decided upon this wide and smiling valley as the site of one of their most ambitious efforts, the name Christchurch became attached to the whole neighbourhood.

The story of the naming of the establishment there is the subject of a legend which has a dozen varying forms, but always with the central core of Divine interposition. Even so it shares the legend with several other Churches, Godshill in the Isle of Wight being one. The story, in the variant which is most widely known, is that the original intention to place the Church upon a hill, where it might be safe from the inroads of the sea and from possible attack from sea rovers, was not approved by Providence for the reason, presumably, that its intended situation would not be the most convenient for the people whom it was intended to serve.

Another version—as to this point alone—suggests that the building on the plains was already in existence, but that its low-lying situation was the cause of a good deal of rheumatic affection among the monks, and that it was this which was responsible for the decision to build upon St. Catherine's Hill. Whatever the originating cause of the decision, the monks found that stones which they had laboriously carried to the hill-top overnight, were invariably at the bottom of the hill in the morning, and while on the first few occasions they may have thought that this was accidental and that they had simply rolled down, they soon discovered that prevision in the matter of fixing the stones was of no avail.

Nor was this all. Beams, which were of the required length for particular duty at the bottom of the hill, were found to be too short when brought into use at the top. One may imagine that the clerk of the works of ancient time had the roughest of rough hours with authority in this respect. Moreover, there was yet another circumstance, the most impressive of all. The toll of the workmen was larger by one during the trivial round of the week than it was on pay-days. Thus by slow degrees the belief grew that the workman who was thus content to work for love was the Christ, and that the stones which had miraculously moved, and the beams which in like manner had shortened themselves, were the evidence that the monks had sinned in thus placing considerations of comfort before the good of Mother Church. The argument was sufficient to convince them, according to all the versions of the legend. The decision to return to the valley was taken, and by that time it was found that the shrunken beams fitted their appointed place ; the stones ceased to move about unless propelled by human agency, and the Silent Workman no longer assisted in the labour of the monks.

In circumstances such as these the Church would quite naturally be called Christchurch, in just the same way as that at Godshill, where the whole process was reversed, gave the name which has remained to that place. What link there may be between this curious legend, and that of Godshill, in the Isle of Wight, which is not far from Christchurch, I do not know.

Apart from the legend the story of the Priory is interesting. There is a certain amount of Saxon work there, but the chief architect was without doubt the romantic Flambard—a New Forester by the way—who exercised a considerable, but not on the whole a very wholesome, influence upon William II.

Flambard was an ecclesiastical architect of parts, as Durham Cathedral as well as Christchurch Priory indicates, in which respect he resembles William of Wykeham, but the comparison thereafter would be hardly flattering to the saintly Bishop of Winchester. Flambard's other gifts, political in character, were directed to securing the profit of the King, and no doubt his own incidentally, rather than the glory of the Church : indeed, in at least one recorded case, where it appeared that if a vacant post in the hierarchy remained untenanted the revenues would revert to the Crown, Flambard insisted that the proper course was to maintain the vacancy.

The link between Christchurch and Durham was strengthened when William II gave Christchurch to Hombard, Bishop of Durham ; but the royal favour did not extend into the next reign, for Henry I seized the good Bishop for not maintaining the Priory after the fashion which seemed good to the King, and promptly put him into the Tower. Not only did he escape therefrom, but was restored at last to his Bishopric, such ups and downs being not uncommon experiences for these early fathers of the Church in England.

It was Henry I who bestowed this valuable possession on Richard de Redvers, Earl of Devon, whose family held, as has been shown, other evidences of the royal bounty in the immediate neighbourhood. De Redvers regarded the place as one to be held, and fortified it carefully, but it was not strong enough to withstand the forces of Stephen when they were arrayed against it. The Earls of Devon held, in addition to their interests at Christchurch and in the lower and middle Avon Valley, much land and wide powers in the Isle of Wight, several of the early Charters of Newport being under their hands.

The family held Christchurch and all that it stood for for several generations, but it finally passed by purchase to the Crown again. And so it remained for many years. When the Commissioners of Henry VIII visited Christchurch, at the time that the Dissolution was in contemplation, the Abbot of the time, Draper, favourably impressed them as a " conformable " person, which may be interpreted as meaning that he was not disposed to fight in a losing cause. Perhaps he would not have shown so much complacency if he had known also that the Commissioners reported to the King that there was in the Priory good furnishings of jewellery and plate which " might be meet for His Majesty's use."

And so the monastic glory of Christchurch passed, but the fine work of Flambard remains in all its impressive detail. The arcading of the nave and the triforium is ascribed to him by Mr. Dewar, but there is much other than Norman work there. Gothic, Early English and Perpendicular are all at their beautiful best.

In the chancel there are curious specimens of grotesque carvings, while the altarpiece, which Warner has supposed to be of Flambard's date, represents the genealogy of Christ from Jesse, with other pictures in

stone, suggestive of the scene at Bethlehem with carvings of angels and the Almighty above the whole.

Among the carven work in the form of memorials is a piece which represents the finding of the body of the poet Shelley, set up by his son, who lived at one time at Boscombe, and there is another to Sir John Chidiock, a knight from over the Dorset border, who fell in the Wars of the Roses.

The Shelley monument at the Priory is often criticized. Cox said of it that it was no doubt a beautiful work of art:

"But the whole thing is false sentiment, unreal in its execution, and from every point of view utterly out of place. The poet's wife (who is represented in the monument) was not present when the body was found; Shelley was never at Christchurch, and the entire conception is a most painful and obvious parody of a Pietà, or the Virgin supporting the dead Christ."

Murray wrote about the same monument: "Its unfitness for a position in a Christian Church becomes the more apparent the longer it is studied."

Many of the churchyards of the Forest contain curious epitaphs, but there is none so completely meaningless, without the key, which has been lost, as that at Christchurch:

"We were not slayne but raysd: raysd not to life; but to be buried twice by men of strife; what rest could the living have when dead had none; agree amongst you here we ten are one. Hen Rogers, died April 17, 1641. I.R."

The Chantry chapel, one of the glories of the place, was built by Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, the mother of Cardinal Pole. Its special beauty is its arabesque tracery.

The Countess has a story which Wise quotes. She was accused of treason, and sentenced to death, but the carrying out of the sentence was long delayed. When at long last—after two years—it was ordered

that it should be encompassed, the Countess refused to lay her head upon the block, and the headsman, says Wise, who puts it with rather unnecessary plainness, was obliged to butcher her as best he could. What a ghastly picture of brutality!

The old house of the de Redvers, quite close to the Priory, was described by Wise as a capital specimen of what is so rarely seen, the true domestic architecture of the twelfth century.

Christchurch was one of the half-dozen or more tiny Hampshire towns which in the halcyon days of Parliamentary history returned members to the Commons on the most attenuated possible of burgess rolls. Lymington's case has been already referred to. Stockbridge was another rotten borough, and there was a worse case than any at Newtown, in the Isle of Wight, which practically had no voters at all. At one time Christchurch returned two members to Parliament, but quite frequently in the far-off days it didn't take the trouble, which rather suggests that its record for political rottenness is not so black as some of the others which have been mentioned.

When all this sort of thing was swept away by the legislation of the early 'thirties of the last century, Christchurch was reduced to a single member, and that circumstance in time produced a fresh anomaly. For Bournemouth grew up quickly within the Parliamentary area, and until the last Act of Redistribution, the member for Christchurch was in fact the member for Bournemouth, and was so regarded and generally described. Now Christchurch, which has as long a parliamentary history as any southern town, has been torn away from Bournemouth and attached to the New Forest division of the County. But out of regard for the feelings of the Christchurch people it was made the head-quarters of the Division, which rather annoyed the good folk of Lymington, where they were specialists

in all forms of election joy, and its name incorporated.

Heron Court, which is quite close to Christchurch, the seat of the Earls of Malmesbury, has, like Somerley, some famous pictures, and a feature which people will go many miles to see, a great rhododendron forest.

These great shrubs bloom prolifically all over the Forest and its neighbourhood—those of the Rhinefield have already been described—but there is no place where they have a greater area or a greater glory than at Heron Court. The green-brown lanes between the bushes are very haunts of ancient peace, and the pines which are everywhere aid the suggestion of quiet mystery.

Bournemouth is quite close to the confines of the Heron Court estate : indeed, the lords of that old manor are the ground landlords of a considerable part of the eastern part of that town. The Meyricks of Hinton Admiral, inland a little from Highcliffe and on the edge of the Forest, and the Cooper Dean family, owned, with Lord Malmesbury, nearly the whole of the town not so very long ago.

The Harris family, whose title is taken from the Wiltshire town of Malmesbury, though there is at present but slight association, has a long record of public service to the State. One of them was Secretary and Controller to Queen Charlotte, and also the author of " Hermes," as well as the friend of the great artistic figures of his time, Reynolds, Handel, and Garrick among the number. Another was the famous diplomatist ; another served in Pitt's governments and was later Governor of the Isle of Wight. He was one of Nelson's intimate friends.

The house was at one time the home of the Priors of Christchurch, and among the many famous pictures which it contains are examples by Rembrandt, Titian, Velazquez and Reynolds.

But, from certain points of view, the chief of the treasures of Heron Court is the collection of birds of all kinds gathered by members of the family, all of whom were well-known sportsmen. One of the birds there is believed to be the last little bustard shot in this country. It is said to have fallen to the gun of Lord Palmerston, who was a trustee of the fourth Earl, the third Earl having been Palmerston's own guardian. There is also a sea eagle, one of three shot on the same bough of the same tree by the same keeper, as well as specimens of the smew and the very rare white thrush.

Bournemouth needs to be briefly described in a record such as this, because, while it was never part of the Forest, it lies very close at hand, and to people living in the place or visiting it, the biggest attraction that can be offered, apart from the more sophisticated joys which all modern seaside resorts provide, is a Forest tour. A very numerous company of English people only know the Forest because it is near Bournemouth.

Bournemouth is a little scornful of comparison with other resorts about the coast. It does not deign to compete either with Brighton, or with the great holiday centres of the North. People do not flock thither from the Midlands as they do to Weymouth, nor from London as they do to Brighton. It is cosmopolis—and it has an all-the-year-round season. It has many and very special beauties: its chines, which are very like the glens and bunnies of the Forest shore farther to the west, though deeper and more luxuriant, are really unique. And the music, it is generally admitted, sets the standard for all England. It has the best municipal orchestra, and the Bournemouth tradition in municipal music is something which really counts. Sir Dan Godfrey has spent thirty years in securing that this should be so, and the critics agree about it to-day, though there were many, many years during which they

said that municipal music could never amount to very much.

There is a high standard of civic enterprise in other respects than this. The plan of laying a drive beneath the cliffs has not only made the sea-front a place of joy during cold weather, but it has contributed very substantially towards saving the coast just there from the erosion which has always been going on all along the Hampshire littoral. The whole scheme of attracting and holding the affections of visitors is scientifically developed, and always do the city fathers keep an eye on the standard of the visitors. This attempt at exclusiveness is derided by many people, but it is an asset of which the value is proven. Yes, Bournemouth is a national possession, and its spirit is as distinctive a thing as is the spirit of Blackpool or Margate.

CHAPTER XIX

THE NORTHERN BORDERLAND

Romsey—The Civic Spirit in the tiny Towns—Broadlands —The Abbey and its Rulers—Two Royal Romances— Scandals in the Nunnery—A Distinguished Citizen.

IN these days of rapid transport there is nothing very arbitrary in suddenly shifting ground from the south-western corner of the Forest's environs to the north-east. The journey is one which would take little more than an hour by road in a car across the centre of the Forest, though by railway it is not quite so easy to manage since Romsey is not on the main line from London to Bournemouth. There are certain points of similarity between Christchurch, which I have but recently been describing, and Romsey —they are about the same size—to the north. Both lie in the rich valleys of rivers the very names of which thrill all anglers; both have very famous churches dominating the town: in both there is a brisk if small-scale industry, and the people of both prize their chartered story very highly.

The local patriotism of all these little Hampshire towns is intensely strong and vital, which may perhaps be illustrated by the recital of a happening the echoes of which are ringing shrilly at the very moment of telling.

There was high debate at Southampton, but nine miles away, upon some considerable civic project, the protagonist of which urged, in terms, that those who

had the decision to make should take the large view. "This is not Romsey," he said. A vast indignation possessed the little town. The Mayor publicly complained of an unnecessarily contemptuous comparison, and claimed for his people civic standards as worthy as those of Southampton or any other town.

For Romsey is not in the least envious of mere size. Eastleigh, just across the way, in the valley of the Itchen, is three times as large already, and it has only been a couple of decades in the making, but the Romsey man would fear no comparison in respect of that vigorous town.

Romsey has an outward and visible charm as well as an inward spirit, difficult to translate into words, which will be understood only by those who live in little old towns. Before I describe its chequered story, a vastly interesting study for those who like to trace the building up in England of the principle of local Government, let me suggest some of its features.

The Abbey broods impressively over the whole place, just as the Cathedral does over Winchester. Around and about the town the Test and its very numerous tributaries wander confusedly; sometimes along the sides of the streets, so that little bridges have to be built into the houses; sometimes circling little patches of meadow so that they are almost islands. I don't suppose that anybody remembers the names of most of these little "cuts," but quite often salmon of considerable size may be seen in them, and the movement up-river in the season of the fish going to spawn is a sight the like of which is not obtainable elsewhere in England, for sometimes the great fish will leap at a pipe in order to get up the stream, and many are killed in the process.

The streets are narrow, and incorrigibly winding. Why were the town-planners of very old time incapable of drawing a straight line or a reasonable curve? And

why, with cheap land available, did they persist in placing houses right out to the edge of the available line and crowding them together so hopelessly? Everywhere in Romsey there is this curious and unnecessary cramping, but in no case has close quarters and the absence of modern amenities given rise to the nuisance of slumdom. There are parts of Southampton, quite modern and roomy, which have a more definite slum quality than anything that Romsey can show. It is one of the things which the public spirit of the small town provides against somehow, while the large town does not.

Romsey has many small industries which keep it in a comfortably flourishing condition while they do not greatly increase its population, and there is a market of growing importance. At one time it rivalled Salisbury's market, and once at least in its history market rights, which had made for the considerable prosperity of Salisbury, were transferred to it. In all things, industrial and civic, the spirit of inherited tradition is strong. Fathers follow sons regularly in industry and in business in Romsey, and business and industry is either developed or retarded by the quality of each succeeding generation. Outwardly these things show no change. Business premises, which were sufficient two generations back, have not as a rule been added to. The only change is that young William (or Edward or Tom) is in control now, and often, like his father, is a town councillor who always makes a point of accompanying his Worship to the Abbey when he goes in state.

A very proper respect is paid to authority in Romsey to-day, even though it may be said that the good people of the little Test Valley town were not always so particular. On the only occasion on which I was present at a meeting of the Romsey Town Council, held in the room of the Town Hall, which is also a Police Court,

and on other occasions a County Court also, the whole of the Aldermen and Councillors were robed, as was the Mayor—the Aldermen in red, and the Councillors in blue.

And this consciousness of a long tradition of which the outward trappings are scrupulously preserved is indicated in other details of local life. All "movements" have vigorous support in Romsey: all the organizations, whether they be concerned with the churches or with secular interests, are alive. It may be that the air is relaxing, seeing that the town stands with its feet in the water so to say, but there is no evidence of slackness in its local concerns. Romsey holds its head very proudly among the towns of Hampshire, conscious that its seventeenth-century charter was the reward of civic merit and not merely the recognition that James I enjoyed himself when he visited Broadlands.

Broadlands is one of the most famous of Hampshire's beautiful homes. Its situation on Test Bank is one of very notable beauty, and the house itself has many delights. Broadlands was an apt name in Palmerston's day, as in this. The Foreign Minister farmed it wisely and in a spacious spirit. No detail even of barn-building on a distant farm was too small for him, engrossed though he might be with great affairs of State. Only lately one of the barns which he built, or which was built under his eye, was burnt down, but there are many other evidences of his enlightened rule in Hampshire. One of his grievances in life was that the nation's affairs stood so constantly in the way of attending to his own in the lovely Test Valley.

Other names associated with Broadlands were those of the St. Barbe family, and in later times the Ashleys, one of whom, the Rt. Hon. Evelyn Ashley, was "Pam's" Private Secretary, and was said to be the perfect official. Sometime Editor of the famous

"Owl," of which the town talked hilariously in the seventies, he was better known; "in these parts," as an Official Verderer of the New Forest, who held the scales with scrupulous fairness between Crown and Commoners, for all that he was nominally a King's man in virtue of his appointment.

"Capability" Brown built Broadlands as we see it to-day. It is still one of the great country houses of England; one in which political entertaining on the grand scale is practised, for Colonel Ashley, who lives there now, is, like his father was, a member of the King's Most Honourable Privy Council and a Minister of the Crown as well as a soldier.

To describe Romsey's chief glory is in one respect a somewhat difficult task, and for a rather curious reason. The Abbey is a present fact of great solidity, and the evidence which its lines and stones provide is there for all to read, but the story of the Benedictine establishment, of which nothing remains but the Abbey Church of St. Mary itself, is difficult to piece together because some early writers mistook Romsey, Hants, for Ramsey, Hunts—the easiest mistake in the world, in dealing with old manuscripts—and sometimes bits of the story of one establishment were mixed up with the fabric of the other, and in time they were merged so that there is a faint doubt about everything which is not capable of secondary proof. The similarity even produces mistakes in this day, as those who are concerned with the postal services could probably testify.

The Benedictine house at Romsey was probably founded by Edward the Elder, and Dean Kitchin, the historian of Winchester, has said, several other authorities being of the same mind, that it was built of wood. The Benedictines were a firmly rooted order in southern England in these early years—there were seventy-three of their nunneries still existing at the Reformation—and many famous ecclesiastics, including St.

Boniface, who had associations with Nursling, close to Romsey, and who carried the Christian ideal into Germany, were among them. Several English Cathedrals, Bath and Gloucester among those in the South, were built by the Benedictines, and of their great Abbey Churches, that at Romsey, which is actually larger than at least four English Cathedrals, was perhaps the most famous.

Its grants were generous and its lands wide and wealthy. The whole town of Romsey belonged to the Order, and it owned also five other manors in Hampshire and more over the Wiltshire border. There were mills and water meadows, little steadings and what not, either occupied at rent or maintained for the general benefit of the establishment by employés who were described, rather startlingly, as "slaves."

One of the grants which the Order received was that of free market; and there was once a rather famous fair there, the subject also of a grant. Other benefactions held at different times by the Abbess for the time being, included the income from several benefices in different parts of the country, and they also held rights of warren—which in modern language might perhaps be described as sporting rights—in various places.

Private benefactions by the faithful were also numerous, the force of imitation in this matter being of great value. William of Wykeham, who built Winchester Cathedral, had a cousin at the Abbey at Romsey, to whom he left a small sum by will, and bequests were made also by him to the Abbess as well as to the other nuns, while a debt which was owed him by the Abbey was forgiven on condition that the money was spent in upkeep.

There are many stories and legends in the story of the Nunnery. Princess Matilda, daughter of King Malcolm of Scotland, once lived there, and it was she,

according to some of the chroniclers, that William the Rufus sought in vain. Henry I loved her too, and an ecclesiastical row of the most portentous sort raged in consequence. The Princess was not in the least unwilling to give up the veil for a throne, but authority represented by her aunt, in whose care she was, stood aghast at the idea, and there was an appeal to the Archbishop Anselm—the gentle Anselm, as somebody described him—whom Rufus drove from office, though he was recalled by Henry.

To him the maiden declared that her profession of vows had been nothing but an expediency due to the hope that the Normans would respect a nun ; that even this decision was not her own, and that in any case she hated it all.

The Archbishop believed her story as told to a great gathering at Lambeth, and expressed the view that vows taken under such circumstances were not to be regarded as binding. But in order to make doubly sure the good Archbishop, being a politician and a courtier as well as the ruler of the Church, put the matter to the popular vote, knowing, no doubt, that the beauty of the Princess Edith—for she took the name Matilda subsequently—would help towards a victory for love, without unduly compromising his authority in the Church. The people gathered at the Synod, acting in the capacity of a jury, declared that they agreed with the Archiepiscopal view.

Anselm himself celebrated the marriage in 1100, and his justification was to be found in the name which the people bestowed upon her, "the Good Queen Maud."

One of the nieces of the Queen, who was once a nun, was later an Abbess of Romsey—this was after the refounding of the Abbey, following a period in which it had fallen away from its very considerable estate. She was Mary, daughter of King Stephen, and it was

probably during her reign as Abbess that the Abbey itself was built. At any rate, Bishop Blois of Winchester, to whom we owe so much good church architecture, was her uncle. She too had a romance which ended much less happily, though there were elements of a parallel with the classic case of her aunt.

At any rate, she forsook the veil, and married a son of the Earl of Flanders, having the benevolent agreement of the King. But Becket was not Anselm. He protested, and, moreover, carried the matter to Rome. It took a long time to settle, but in the end the Church won : the marriage was declared void, and the Abbess who was for a while a wife, was sent to a French convent, where she died of a broken heart.

The two cases quoted differ oddly, but they have no great significance as examples of ecclesiastical case law because there is a good deal of disputation concerning the facts. No two historians agree about them, but it is fairly clear that there was no certainty of there being one law for the highly placed and another for the humble. Otherwise Stephen's niece would not have spent her latter years in spiritual torment in a French religious house, nor would it have been necessary to pass an Act of Parliament to legitimatize her children, as was done in 1189.

Others among the Abbesses of Romsey had interesting stories. Amica was a strong-minded custodian of the valuable rights and privileges which belonged to the Abbey, for she secured the restatement of the grant that the Abbess should have magisterial powers with application, it would seem, over the whole of the Abbey lands. Even the right of capital punishment was included in the grant, and Romsey's equipment, therefore, included a gallows. Whether she ever made use of them or not this deponent cannot tell, but there is incontrovertible evidence that about this time the Abbey needed a strong hand.

The community, in the early thirteenth century and again in the sixteenth century, came under the unfavourable notice of the hierarchy. A Prebendary of the Abbey behaved so disreputably that if he was not actually inhibited, he was forbidden to enter the Church. The Bishop had to take notice, too, of acts bordering on impropriety of which some of the nuns were accused.

In what these acts consisted the records do not show, but it was evident that community life became a hollow mockery ; that those within the Abbey passed out into the town as they listed, and that they did it at night as regularly as by day; that the townspeople came to the Abbey as and when they chose, and that in one case, of rather later date, the Abbess herself drank to excess, and so far forgot the dignity which should have enwrapped her as to invite the nuns to drink with her.

But the break-up of such institutions was at hand, and Romsey's establishment, richer by far than most, because so many of the earlier grants had appreciated in value, was a rich prize. Mr. Cuthbert Monk estimated that the net revenues of the Abbey at the Dissolution were equal to nearly £5,000.

Part of this sum was distributed in annuities, the last Abbess being one of those so to benefit.

It was at this time that Romsey became possessed of its Abbey, a payment of £100 being made in order that it should become available for use as the Parish Church, in accordance with a plan which was very general at the time. Beaulieu provided a local example of the same kind of thing.

Much of the land belonging to the Abbey was granted by the King to Lord Seymour, charged with various pensions and annuities. It passed first by purchase to the St. Barbe family and then by purchase again to the family of Viscount Palmerston (to whom,

by the way, there are statues both at Romsey and Southampton), from whom they descended, after Mr. Cowper Temple, to Mr. Evelyn Ashley. A little point not without interest to those who are familiar with these matters, is that the last four owners have all been members of the Privy Council.

I have not described the churches of the Forest and its neighbourhood in great detail, because with a few exceptions they make no pretensions to be other than they are—the holy places of the villages, small in size, and rarely possessing architectural attributes distinguishing them from village churches in other parts of the country. There are, as I say, exceptions. Christchurch Priory and Romsey and Beaulieu Abbeys are among them, and for that reason it is necessary to describe them.

There is work in the Abbey which those competent to judge describe as that carried out under the authority of King Edgar and Canute, but the fabric really belongs to the twelfth century, though some portions of the nave were added much later. The building is of Isle of Wight stone, from the district of Quarr Abbey probably, and its dimensions are 263 feet by 131 feet (being widest at the transepts). There is no better example of Norman work in the whole in England. The vaulting is especially beautiful, and within are some ecclesiastical possessions of very great interest, such as a Saxon rood sculptured in stone, the Romsey Psalter, in manuscript, and a fourteenth-century painted wooden reredos, dealing with the Resurrection.

To-day the great Church is very admirably cared for, but it was not always so. It is said that certain marks on the north transept stonework are the evidence of an attempt to destroy it during the Civil War. Later still, there was the gravest unconcern for the care of the outward fabric and for interior seemliness.

The chancel was carefully restored about 1850, and nearly twenty years later the lower tier of arches was opened. It was during the progress of this work that some quaint old stone lamps, said to be of twelfth-century date, were found; and some time earlier a stone coffin was opened, which contained the body of a priest fully robed, which, it was competently assumed, was of fourteenth-century date.

The Rev. Canon Berthon—he who invented the famous Berthon collapsible boats, which have saved many lives at sea, and which were built in a yard almost under the Abbey walls—laboured valiantly during the time he held the living for the fitting preservation of the great church committed to his charge, as indeed did his successors, Canon Cooke Yarborough, whose happy task it was also, at another time, to be custodian of Christchurch Priory, as Vicar of that parish, and the Rev. A. J. Robertson.

It has been said that apart from the story of the Benedictine establishment, which was certainly at one time notorious for the licence which prevailed there, Romsey has had a singularly uneventful life.

It has no parliamentary history at all. Old as it is in the civic roll of Hampshire towns, it never had the right to return burgesses to Parliament, and in consequence there is no story of parliamentary scandal and corruption such as marks the records of so many of the small towns of its type, and of which there were several in the county. None had a more scandalous history, indeed, than the neighbouring small town of Stockbridge, which was never a borough at all, but which, in the days when political influence was in inverse ratio, very often, to the size of a place, was as corrupt as any town in England. The political story of Stockbridge pales even that of Lymington.

But Romsey escaped in that respect. There have

been times in the more recent history of Parliament when Romsey was the head-quarters of a parliamentary division, but even that glory exists no longer. In every other particular it is true to type.

Several very distinguished Englishmen have been citizens of Romsey. Palmerston was one, as we have seen.

Another very famous man, an even more romantic figure in some respects, was Sir William Petty, the son of a tradesman in the town, who rose to very high estate and to the friendship of the great men of his time. And he was proud of it too, for he told his life story, not in a book of recollections, which is the modern fashion, but in his will, which certainly had the effect of making it less perishable. He studied medicine in France, Holland and Germany, and also at Oxford, where he held a professorship. He won much distinction in his profession, and earned much abuse for the way in which he administered the affairs of the Army in Ireland, of which he was, to use a modern phrase, Director of Medical Services. He secured efficiency there, but his enemies suggested that he managed at the same time to look after his financial interests very successfully. He wrote on political economy as well as medicine, and it has been said that his income was as much as £15,000 a year. He married the Baroness Shelbourne, and one of his daughters married the Earl of Kerry, upon whose family the Marquisate of Lansdowne was afterwards conferred. He was created an Earl himself, the patent bearing the name of Kilmore, but it would appear that he did not live long enough for the completion of the grant, for his grave at Romsey (beneath a full-length recumbent figure in stone) refers to him as Sir William Petty.

The link with Romsey of the Lansdowne family was not long maintained, but afterwards representatives

of that very famous family lived at Southampton in a great house on the Castle Hill, which was actually built to a great extent with the stones of that great defensive work which was the centre-piece of the Southampton fortifications.

Since the Test is one of the border rivers of the Forest—the Avon is the other—it will not be unsuitable to describe some of the interesting and historic villages which group themselves so picturesquely upon its banks. They are outside the historic Forest, but many of them are less than half an hour away by motor-car. Indeed, it may almost be said that the pleasantest way of approach to the Forest would be along those remote and sequestered lanes of west-central Hampshire which I have called the Valley of the Test.

It is hardly necessary to say that the Test is one of our most famous salmon and trout rivers. Historical accuracy compels me to admit that it was the Test's twin river, the Itchen, which stimulated old Izaak Walton to literary enthusiasm such as was unusual with him, but it might well have been the Test. From its narrow upper reaches, close to the downland, to its entry into Southampton Water, along the Forest shore, the Test has an ever-changing charm.

One of the most delightful of the river villages is Mottisfont, where there was a thirteenth-century priory of Austinians (on the site of an earlier Saxon building), which was at one time a rather famous establishment, and attached to it was a grange at Pittleworth, rather like the St. Leonard's Grange at Beaulieu, but not so large. At the dissolution Henry VIII gave the Manor to Lord Sandys, or more precisely, made it the subject of a "deal," for he acquired in exchange the whole of Chelsea Manor. Another Sandys fell while fighting for the King, at Bramdean in 1644. The present house has an interesting Tudor doorway and

a quite remarkable vaulted crypt. The Abbey was for many years in the occupation of the Mills, one of the most ancient of Hampshire families and very extensive landowners still all over this part of the county right to the Forest boundary at Colbury. Sir John Mill of Eling was one of the long line which rendered service to Southampton in Parliament, and whose arms are upon the Bargate in that town. He sat in the Parliaments of James I and Charles I, and on one occasion entertained the latter monarch to dinner at his house at Southampton, when the King reviewed troops upon the Saltmarsh.

The whole of this northern Forest border has a wide popularity as a residential centre. There are charming properties on either hand of the river, some old, some new, but all delightful. And there is a happy rivalry about beautiful gardens which makes the countryside glow in summer-time. One of the most interesting is Stanbridge Earls, standing on the site of a Saxon chapel and said to be the burial-place of Ethelwulf, father of Alfred. The house is of mid-seventeenth-century date, but some portion of the central part is said to be about the same date as Romsey Abbey.

It has been asserted that the break-up of the large estates and the closing down of so many of the famous homes of England is changing the face of the countryside. It is unhappily true. Many of them have changed hands in this district, but fortunately it has not meant the closing down of any. Rather does there exist the keenest desire among people who are able to satisfy their desire for a country home on the traditional model, to settle in west-central Hampshire, near the Forest border.

One other Test Valley village must at least be described. It is below Romsey—half-way between that town and Southampton—and its jolly name is

Nursling, which is a corruption of Nutshalling. The most notable person connected with the place was St. Boniface, the eighth-century Archbishop of Mayence, who died a martyr's death while carrying the Gospel to the lands which are now Germany, being indeed the first missionary to that country.

St. Boniface lived at Nursling for twenty years in a monastery there, and set out on his missionary tour thence. The church is dedicated to him.

A feature of the church at Nursling is a very beautiful alabaster monument of early seventeenth-century date in memory of Sir Richard and Lady Mill, of the famous Hampshire family of which mention has been made. It is an altar-tomb, and Sir Richard is represented in armour as a Knight (his ancestor fought at Crecy). Above the figures is a richly elaborated arch surmounted by a coat of arms in which the chained bear in the Mill arms occupies a place. Thirty years ago when it was restored and repaired and the heraldic device repainted it had a very remarkable beauty and delicacy. Grove Place, which is not far from the church, was once part of the Palmerston property. It is a Tudor house of distinctive form in which Queen Elizabeth made a somewhat more prolonged stay than usual during one of her very frequent State journeys. It was even called a Queen Elizabeth hunting lodge at one time. The house, now in private occupation once more, has had many vicissitudes, and for a few years was used as a private lunatic asylum.

I must not throw too wide a net in this sketch of the New Forest borderland, but it would not be complete without some reference to Southampton. It is not likely that the visitor to the Forest will omit to include that town in any itinerary which comprises the Forest, since it is so close—but six miles by road—and actually within sight across the river.

It will not be necessary to give other than the sketchiest outline of the story of a town of which the very bones of English history has been fashioned, and which is at this date much more definitely than ever before one of the Gateways of the Empire. *En passant*, a leaflet which comes into my hands as I write, issued by one of the great motor organizations, purports to indicate convenient—and leisurely—motor tours, and the amount of time that each should occupy. In it the New Forest is allotted one day only, which could only mean that all that was intended was racing progress over the Forest's better known roads without deviation to the right hand or to the left. Why, Southampton justifies more than a day.

It has links as a fort with Saxon times—the earliest Southampton was a mud and wattle settlement at the point where the rivers meet—with the Roman invasion, and with every Imperial development since those days. Its earlier trade-links with France and Spain have grown until there is no regular sea lane in any part of the world unused by ships which call Southampton home.

Canute stood upon its shore on an historic occasion; King John took toll of the incoming wine tuns, if not in person, at least through the agency of Daniel the butler; an Earl of Warwick was hereditary custodian of the weighing beam, and made a very good thing out of it. Thither came the traders from the Mediterranean and the Levant, prepared, if the good burghers did not wish to buy their gorgeous fabrics and unknown fruits, to come ashore with weapons of war to encourage the spirit of barter. Thence sailed the Pilgrim Fathers in the "Mayflower," and a couple of hundred yards away lie the great liners which carry their descendants—vessels capable of carrying the "Mayflower" and the "Speedwell" on the same deck, and even then of leaving space for as many

passengers as would make up the whole population of a small town.

For those who would desire to see the remaining evidence of a past which is being somewhat eclipsed by a highly commercialized present, it may be worth noting that the mediæval defences of the town—which really needed them in the days when those who came overseas on business often regarded looting as likely to yield better results than anything else—are in as good a condition of preservation as those of any town in England. The old town gates, of which the Bargate is the chief—a very remarkable feature of the town main street—if not unique is only to be equalled at York and Canterbury. King John's Palace too, though probably misnamed in that the monarch never used it as a place of residence, is said to be the best preserved twelfth-century house in England. Close at hand is a magnificent old timbered house of Tudor date, which is also declared to be as perfect an example of its type as any remaining. It belongs to the day when Southampton possessed, as Camden noted, many great merchants' houses, Southampton being—rather earlier than Camden's time—London's most considerable rival. If, thereafter, until fairly modern times Southampton did not flourish as it flourishes now, or as it throve in the days when the French population lived in or near French Street, and the native population in the courts off English Street, its citizens made a point of preserving its historic relics.

It might be said that they just left them alone, since more than half the destruction of ancient buildings has been done by the hand which sought to restore; but in any case they deserve our gratitude. There are exceptions to this, however. God's House, a fourteenth-century hospice for the aged and infirm, was swept away by Queen's College, which administered

the benefits left by Gervaise le Riche, and up-to-date almshouses substituted, and the restorer has also busied himself with the ancient Chapel of God's House, a very precious historical possession. In it lie the bones of those high officers of State who plotted against Henry V just as he was leaving Southampton for the plains of Agincourt, and on discovery were executed on the spot, as Shakespeare so dramatically recounts. The Chapel has other associations of importance. It was the rallying point of the refugees who fled from the Low Countries from the terror of the Inquisition, and who landed at Southampton—as did the Belgians four hundred years afterwards from an even greater tyranny—and when they asked, on reaching the sanctuary of an English town, for a church wherein they might learn to reverence God and the magistrates, the Chapel of God's House was assigned to them, and there to this day the liturgy of the Church of England, of which it became a part in the early eighteenth century, is said by a French minister in Anglican orders.

One other example—the only other—of failure to preserve the treasures in stone of the past. There was to the north of the town a priory of the Austin order, to which all the town churches owned allegiance. All that now remains of it is a tiny bit of wall at the bottom of the garden of a six-roomed suburban villa. It is true that in a fourteenth-century attack on the town the French did very considerable damage to the fabric, but in my own recollection the little relic was four times as considerable as it is now.

Southampton had an eighteenth-century vogue as a health resort when it forgot all its dreams of greatness as a gateway of Empire, but that did not last. Either its chalybeate spring dried up, or royal favour was withdrawn, or a new cure was discovered. It was but

a brief reign in the company of Bath and the Wells, and all that is left of it is some rather notable examples of early Georgian domestic architecture now being absorbed in an increasing degree to commercial uses.

CHAPTER XX

FOREST PONIES AND CATTLE

New Forest Ponies—The Armada Legend—Lord Arthur Cecil and the Breed—Use in Warfare—How the Breed has Improved—The Board of Agriculture Inquiry—The Pony Fair—Rounding up the "Young Stuff"—Forest Cattle.

THERE is a tradition, based no doubt on a chance guess of an old historian who was attracted by romance rather than the probabilities, that the New Forest ponies are the descendants, in part, of those which came across-Channel with the Armada; but nobody really believes it now.

It is not an impossibility that the mighty navy of all-powerful Spain was at one point in that unlucky pilgrimage which ended in overwhelming disaster, dimly visible from St. Catherine's Point at the back of the Isle of Wight; it is not unlikely that the first of the beacon fires which flamed across southern England was lighted on that down which stands high above St. Catherine's, but the Armada had hardly begun to fall to pieces then. All along the Hampshire and Island coasts the trained bands were ready for the invaders. Indeed, Hampshire, as always in time of war and national peril, made a very admirable show of the necessary preparations, but even if the plight of the Armada was such at that point of the crossing that the cattle aboard the galleons made an effort to find dry land, they could not have reached the

were instructed to purchase cobs, and to obtain them in quantity it was necessary to go to foreign countries, the United States, Argentina and Hungary, where they were procured. Had the demand been made for ponies, a very large proportion of our Army's need could have been bought cheaply and quickly in this country. For in the ponies of Exmoor, Wales, the New Forest and other districts we possess large numbers of animals whose small size bears no relation to their weight and carrying power, and whose mode of life is the best possible preparation for 'roughing it' in South Africa."

Lord Arthur Cecil was one of those who, with the available knowledge of the time, believed that his beloved ponies possessed a real national usefulness, and the New Forest Scouts, a small but highly efficient body of light infantry, mounted on Forest ponies, owed a very great deal to his infectious enthusiasm. Lord Lucas, a New Forester too, gave to the work of improving the breed that fine practical idealism which was the leading characteristic of a life of great usefulness, and when he lived at Picket Post, near Ringwood, he raised some very fine stock. Mr. Philip Kershaw, barrister, civil servant, aeronaut, and scientist, was also drawn into the work by the enthusiasm of his friend, Lord Lucas, and spent several years before the war in the business of improvement. With the late Rev. T. F. Dale, the leading authority on moorland ponies, he gave to the Burley Society a place of the first importance.

The development of the breed was not quite in the direction expected at that time. The ponies have no future in warfare except under circumstances which are scarcely likely to arise again, but there are other avenues open. As Sir Walter Gilbey, a great authority on these matters, wrote in the book already quoted, developing theories put forward in his book "Ponies Past and Present":

"Assuming that the peculiar suitability of horses between

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14 hands and 14.3 hands for mounted infantry and light cavalry purposes is acknowledged by the authorities, and that these forces will in future form a large proportion of our standing armies, it behoves us to turn our attention to the task of breeding."

The argument is not vitiated by the fact that Sir Walter's anticipations have not been verified by the fact, for he goes on :

" The high prices obtainable for first-class polo ponies have given a stimulus to pony breeding, and it may be said that the foundations of that industry have been laid. . . . What is required is an animal between 14 and 14.3 hands ; it must be stout and able to carry weight, capable of covering long distances at fair speed, able to subsist on coarse or poor food for weeks together without losing condition, strong of constitution to withstand the exposure inevitable on a campaign, and the more tractable the better. To get small horses endowed with these qualifications we must look to the breeds which possess them in marked degree, to the ponies of the Welsh hills, Exmoor, the New Forest, the Fell districts and the West of Ireland. In these we have ponies ranging in height from 12.2 to 13.3 or 14 hands ; they are compact, sturdy and untiring ; they can carry weights which are out of all ratio to their size ; they live on grass, and the open-air life they lead, year in and year out, has made them completely independent of the luxurious ' coddling ' bestowed on other horses."

The New Foresters have always known these things to be true of their sturdy little beasts ; they knew that whether the Romans brought the very remote ancestors of the breed, as Wise thought possible, or whatever their origin, they possessed quite remarkable qualities. In his introduction to the " New Forest Studbook " (published by the Burley and District New Forest and Cattle Society) Lord Arthur Cecil wrote that sixty years ago

" the New Forest pony must have been a very smart, active, hardy animal with an exceptionally fine bright head and general outlook, and it is possible of much greater size than would exist on the Forest under present conditions."

The earlier ponies were, as Lord Arthur showed, of the riding type, but later "it is to be feared a good deal of cart and other undesirable blood crept in, and hence the somewhat ugly heads and misshapen hind quarters which are sometimes seen."

Arabs and Barbs were occasionally introduced in the spasmodic and undirected efforts which were made by the commoners to meet special needs which they had in mind, but the results were not always satisfactory. Queen Victoria once gave a couple of Arabs to the Forest for breeding purposes, Abegan and Yirassau.

"It is my belief," wrote Lord Arthur Cecil in 1913 in the "Studbook" article already referred to,

> "that sufficient new blood has been brought into the Forest for many years to come. We have had Arabs, Barbs, Thoroughbreds, Dartmoor, Fell and Highland blood, and yet, owing to the mysterious power of nature to grind down and assimilate all these types to the one most suited to the land, our breed of Foresters is still fairly of one type, and is rapidly becoming more so, and will continue to develop on these lines if the lessons learnt from registration are attended to."

A valuable inquiry into the possibilities of improving the mountain and moorland ponies of this country, carried out by a Committee of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, took place in 1912, Lord Arthur Cecil being the Chairman of the Committee, and the late Rev. T. F. Dale, one of the first authorities on small horses in the world, who in the later years of his life, on his return from India, worked zealously in the interests of the Burley Society, being one of the members.

Among the questions which were the subject of investigation by this Committee, were those of the form in which government assistance could be given, the most practical way of applying these methods

of improvement for the benefit of the small-holder, and the even more important point of the preservation of the purity of the breed.

In that report there was a reference to the effect upon the New Forest breed of the introduction of Arab and Thoroughbred blood. Shapely specimens upon the Forest were, it was found, soon sold, and the inferior ones remained. In time there was a gradual assimilation to type, which was what Lord Arthur Cecil found in his own experience, together with a retention of some of the characteristics of the finer breed.

In one show, following on these experiments, Lord Arthur took fourteen prizes.

Though the Committee found that the greatest use to which the ponies were put in the New Forest, and to some extent in the other areas, was in connection with the work of the small-holders, it was shown that the mountain and moorland ponies had played a part of very considerable importance in the building up of finer stock. Ponies were used for racing, the report of Lord Arthur Cecil's Committee stated, in the seventeenth century. Animals with a mixture of pony and Eastern blood were the racehorses of those days. "In fact," says the report, "the Eastern blood owed much of its beneficial influences on the English racehorse to its fortunate concurrence with the blood of our native ponies in the early years of the eighteenth century."

Racing with New Forest ponies still takes place in the Forest, sometimes in the familiar manner at the shows, and often as matches between individual owners riding their own animals. In both cases the utmost enthusiasm exists among pony owners.

In regard to the questions of recognition and registration, this Committee found that the system of awarding premiums to the owners of brood mares

and stallions in the Forest through the Burley Society and the Association for the Improvement of the breed of New Forest Ponies (founded in 1891), which held an annual show at Lyndhurst, and still does, indeed, was one of much value in encouraging breeders to produce the best possible stock. Generally speaking, and dealing not especially with the Forest, the Committee found that there was a lack of stallions suitable for roaming at large in forest and moorland districts, and the premiums should be increased in respect of them.

The Committee was able to convince the Board of Agriculture of the wisdom of the premium system which had been in actual operation in the Forest, and grants were made for the purpose. A Registration system was also approved, and a part of its operation was that there should be provision for the interchange of stallions so as to obviate the ill results of too much inbreeding.

The "Studbook" came in a very short time, and now there is in regular operation a premium system under the ægis of the War Office, but administered by the Association for the Improvement of the Breed of New Forest Ponies. The plan, to put it shortly, is to pay premiums to the owners of stallions (which shall be passed by the Verderers) which run in the Forest, and in addition to this form of encouragement there are a series of trophies, much valued in the Forest, given by Col. Ashley, M.P., by the sons of the late Lord Arthur Cecil (one of whom, Lt.-Col. R. C. Cecil, has followed closely in his father's footsteps in securing the improvement of the breed), by Sir George and Lady Meyrick, by Mr. Frank Perkins, a former Member of the Division, and by the Association in memory of Lord Lucas, who did so much for the ideals for which this society stands.

The Burley Society, which at one time operated

in that part of the Forest exclusively, but which now is a Forest Society in the widest sense, holds an annual show, which is increasingly important, on the August Bank Holiday. It deals only with mares—the other Society being responsible for the stallions. It was to this Society that Lord Lucas belonged when he first began to take an interest in the ponies of the Forest, and this Society also had the benefit of the experience of the Rev. T. F. Dale, whose pre-eminence as a judge of forest and moorland ponies has already been referred to, as hon. secretary.

This Society, and the older one founded by Lord Arthur Cecil and the late Mr. W. J. C. Moens, work in the most cordial harmony, and there is little doubt that the improvements which have been effected in the breed during the last thirty years are wholly the result of the work of the disinterested experts mentioned, though the enthusiastic way in which the Commoners have backed them has made success more rapid.

The possibility of evolving usable polo ponies from the New Forest breed was referred to by the Cecil Committee, which reported that the most successful polo pony sires are those thoroughbred horses which are reversions to the pony ancestry which is at the foundation of nearly all the great winning families of racehorses.

That aspect has interested a good many of the larger farmers with Common rights. The mares which they especially prize are not always run in the Forest, but they have hopes, with this stock, to cross with a thoroughbred in order to produce a dam for the production of polo pony stock. But that side of the question does not interest everybody. Authority is anxious, and the deferred premium system is based on this, that owners shall keep their stock on the Forest, but there is (or was) a considerable demand for New Forest stock for the purposes of the pits. At

one time the agents of the coal-owners used to attend the Lyndhurst pony fair, lending a touch of novelty to a very interesting and characteristic Forest gathering, and buy for this purpose, but in recent years there has been set up in its place a plan by which ponies are bought either at this fair, or at Brockenhurst market, or otherwise, and despatched by the truck-load to the mines.

At one time this fair was held at Swan Green, one of the most delightful of the Forest lawns, just outside Lyndhurst on the main road to the sea, surrounded by great trees, and with picturesque thatched cottages bowered in roses here and there. The pony sales were the justification of the gathering originally, but there have been times in the history of the fair when these considerations had little weight and the claims of the pleasure fair of the Hampstead Heath model were paramount.

Naturally all the tricksters of the fair world came together: copers and gamblers, artful dodgers of every sort, not to buy Forest ponies, but to sell stock which had by means which they were not always willing to disclose come into their possession. There is no need to describe them in detail, because their ways were the ways of such from the beginning of time. The only thing that was certain was that the Forester who bought animals casually from strangers was certain to find before the day was out that the title was very imperfect or that the animal was worse than that.

But that day has gone again. Now the fair is held, not at Swan Green, which was too close to a greatly used main road for safety, but on the Race-course at the back of the village. The pleasure fair remains in all its tarnished glory, but the people who wander out across the Forest for the delights which it offers are not interested in horses other than those of

badly gilden wood which revolve round and round a central standard to hoarse music. Casual horse-selling has practically ceased, but within the last few years properly conducted auctions of Forest stock are arranged by professional auctioneers of high local repute. In a word, the whole thing has been cleaned up to the benefit of everybody.

Most of these things, the fair excepted, are not visible to the Forest visitor. Of outward and visible signs of the important intensive work which has been going on for years there are very few. To the person who merely passes wonderingly and admiringly over the Forest roads all that can be seen are these tubby little cattle, surefooted, wise, and contented with trampled furze, if nothing better offers, in the way of food.

With the dams, in season, are the shaggy, long-legged, little foals, grey-coloured, with tiny heads and thin bodies. They are quite fearless and take no notice at all of the pageant of the modern road. Indeed, they are less regardful for their own safety than motorists would have them be. They wander across roads as indifferently as they do the most remote rides, and, since the rapid development of motoring, losses from road accidents are frequent. Within these last few years, however, a system of insurance has been set up by the Verderers with the warm support of most of the Commoners, by means of which owners of horses which are lost as the result of motor accidents are recompensed. The Verderers take other steps to help the Commoners to protect the ponies by the issue of notices and the posting of warnings on the roads leading to the Forest, but there is always the risk of accident with ponies, or, less frequently, cattle, and not in the least unusually with pigs, some of which have the insensate habit of sleeping at night in the middle of the road.

The ponies wander mostly in particular areas which are largely unfrequented, but they stray on the roads if the fancy takes them. The Forester knows their little ways, but the stranger is often rendered "hot and bothered" by their apparent aimlessness, especially if he is on the open road with the throttle open.

The owners of the Forest ponies worry not at all about their stock. They seem to know intuitively where they will find them when particular animals are ready to be brought in either for sale or for breaking in; their haunts are familiar. They seem to have a sort of round. It is an exciting time for the Commoner and his friends, this hunt of the semi-wild stock of our tiny southern Hampshire prairie, conducted from pony-back, but not at all on the western model. Patience and not the lasso is the staple of the farmer's equipment on these occasions, and patience always wins in the end.

The round-up is a great and joyous affair for those who take part. There are few of the appurtenances of the same ceremony when it takes place on a vastly different scale on the western plains of America, but there are some minor points of resemblance. The riders are not cowboys and make no pretence of looking like them. They wear the nondescript attire of their ordinary work, but they are always carefully gaitered, for riding in the Forest is not a sport for a novice. Beyond a riding switch and a wise pony between their legs they have no other equipment than their own knowledge of the Forest and of the way in which its natural features can be employed to the undoing of the wild cattle, into the minds of which they have to instil something of the need for obedience to the ways of man. Harried hither and thither by a band of shouting men, the Forest ponies—for all that they normally regard humans as queerly shaped objects of the countryside, do not look upon them

as enemies as the deer does—are, really, wild at this time. The flowing manes and tails, the shouting men, and the general hullabaloo which attends a round-up, go to the making of an action picture which is almost thrilling.

The lasso, as I have said, is not used at all, nor is the corral, at least not that of the wild and woolly West. On the only occasion on which I saw one of these spectacular hunts, the band of ponies was driven into a corner of the Forest just where a yard entrance drive and a convenient copse made a corner, with a wide way in and no very distinguishable way out.

Mr. Hutchinson tells in his charming book on Forest customs and traditions of the skill of one William King, of Bramshaw, and his not less wonderful pony in keeping these small herds of stampeding ponies under some sort of control when it is desired to gather them in for the purposes of the market. This particular pony was in use, as Mr. Hutchinson shows, in a carrier's cart in ordinary times, but it was always ready and eager for the chase in this particular form. Indeed, it was said that this pony often went pony driving on its own account for the sheer joy of it, whether the youngsters required to be rounded up or not.

When the gathering up has been completed the animals are sorted out for sale. Sometimes a rough attempt at breaking them in is made if the owners have sufficient of the cowboy instinct about them to make the attempt, but they do not understand or care for the art of rodeo: their only idea is to increase the value of the "young stuff" by a pound or two.

There is a passage in Gilpin's "Forest Sketches" which is characteristic of his topographical method:

"Beside the horse the Forest is much frequented by another animal of his genus, inferior indeed in dignity, but superior

in picturesque beauty—I mean the ass. Among all the tribes of animals, scarce one is more ornamental in landscape."

The good Gilpin admits that it is difficult to ascertain in what this beauty consists, but he always had the point of the ornamental in his mind. He was always looking for pictures, and a picture lacked everything which was calculated to satisfy him if it had not somewhere within its field an animal of some sort.

One of the reasons why in Gilpin's time there were plenty of donkeys in the Forest was because there was a considerable demand for mules to be obtained by crossing the Forest horse with the ass. It is no longer done in the Forest. There are donkeys there, but they do not range the Forest in the same way as do the ponies, though they are regularly turned out by the Commoners. Their habits are different ; they do not run in companies, and they are generally to be found near their owner's home. They have their uses as draught beasts, but they are not in any sense characteristic of the Forest, which is another way of saying that a Forest donkey is very like any other in appearance as well as in character. Of mules there are very few.

Nor is there anything very distinctive about the New Forest cattle. Some of the big landowners within the Forest marches breed Dexters, and some of them are famous, but they are not in the very least the type which is meant in the phrase " Forest cattle." They do not range the Forest at all. But all the Commoners make a point of keeping a cow or two, since they cost nothing practically during many months of the year, and soon acquire habits which make them very little trouble to their owners. They always keep together, and the fact that the leader has a bell meets every need if by chance they do not drift homeward towards even. There is no Forest

breed, though the phrase is sometimes used of them. They have the common quality that they are small and very hardy, and can pick up a living when food is scarce on next to nothing. Various attempts have been made to improve their stamp, but it has been found that only straight-bred Forest cattle have any chance of making a success of their life on the Forest. Furze tops suit them very well when nothing else is available, but breeds which have been used to ordinary pastures do not take kindly to that kind of life. Commoners soon find out what type of animal does well, and they do not experiment about it. The Burley Society makes a point of including cattle classes in its very excellent annual show, and very many of the animals are those which pick up their living in the Forest, but no attempt on the same scale as the ponies has been made at scientific improvement.

The keeping of pigs in the Forest has almost been elevated into an industry. Every commoner keeps pigs; indeed, very many of them find it a lot more profitable to specialize in this way than to breed the ponies. It has always been so. More than one of the big grievances of the past, leading to the interminable quarrels between the Crown and those possessed of Forest rights, have had relation to the swine. It was many times urged against the old-time keepers that the head of swine which many of them maintained was so great that serious damage was done to the Forest growth. In these days they are hardly in sufficient numbers for that, but they certainly add considerably to the worries of the motorist.

There was at one time a distinct New Forest breed of pigs, introduced by Charles I, but it has disappeared, or at least the animals are no longer to be identified. For one reason, they were not particularly good baconers, and the Commoner is a practical man in

these matters. He raises pigs, or allows them to raise themselves, for their flesh and for nothing else, and the good bacon pig is what he seeks.

Commoners have the settled right to feed their stock on the Forest during the pannage month, which is a month and a half in length, but in practice a great many of the pigs live on the Forest round the year and manage to pick up a living quite comfortably. But they all have owners, far or near, though it has been said that the wild boar, the descendants of those introduced by Charles I, are not actually extinct. If any of them, in fact, remain, they have for years settled in the Forest's very heart, for they are never seen.

The pannage season—late September when the beechmast is falling and the acorns are dropping—is the swine's happy month. There is food for greater companies of them than ever require it in the great beech-woods, especially those in the neighbourhood of Boldrewood, and swine coming in off the Forest thereafter fetch very good prices indeed. During the remainder of the year they find the fern quite to their taste, with the various herbs of the field as salading. Only in times of frost do the Forest pigs run any risk of suffering, and at such times as these their owners attend to their needs, for the animals have developed some rudimentary instinct which leads them home.

Pannage in old time had something almost of ceremonial about it. Then, as Gilpin shows, it was the practice for the Foresters to hand the little matter of teaching the swine to enjoy their special feast over to a contractor, a swineherd, who knew the ways of the breed. His was the task of showing them where their natural food of mast might be found, and to instil into them a sense of the necessity of hunting for it. His methods were curious. He gathered up

A FOREST LAWN: BIRCHES AND STORM CLOUDS

the swine of his various employers and led them through the Forest to the beech-woods, and late at night fed them, leaving them to " sleep it off." It was a strange experience for animals which normally lived in semi-captivity as did the Forest pigs in that day, but they took to camping out fairly readily, and when they showed a disposition to wander the swineherd called them back with a horn. They began to associate the music with the time and place when and where food was plentiful. After a while they began to recognize their dinner call, and in a few days he found that they got quite used to the new life and did not wander at all, or at least not more than was convenient.

Gilpin, who studied the habits of Forest swine with the precision which he devoted to all else, observed that the animals had some rough kind of social order which guided them. They sought their food in small herds under a leader and kept the same company during the whole time of pannage. But he was also at pains to point out that these elaborations—the swine-herd with the horn, the preparing of night-quarters and the like—were not exactly the common practice. It was observed by some of those who sought to benefit by pannage, but not all of them. Numbers doubtless took their chance and left their swine to do likewise, and it is this latter practice which prevails to-day.

CHAPTER XXI

DEER AND BADGERS

The Deer—Their Habits and their Numbers—Badger Digging.

OF the deer of the Forest I have already spoken, in regard more particularly to their relation to questions of Forest politics into which they very frequently entered. The story of the deer-hunting in the Forest, which is famous, has yet to be told, but it will not be inappropriate to refer to the subject in this section, which deals with the natural life of the Forest. Red deer, fallow deer and roe deer are all to be found in the Forest even now, but of red deer and roe deer there must be very few remaining. Roe deer used occasionally to be seen in the Whitley Ridge neighbourhood, and Rogers estimated some years ago that there were about 200 or 300 of them left, but a great many were being killed about that time, and in one year it was estimated by him that the number was reduced by about 100.

There was a time when there were as many as 7,000 deer in the Forest, but that was a long time ago. They have been always hunted, and, as has been shown, they were once officially "removed" in order to please the Commoners, because it was said that they did so much damage to growing crops and to the

Forest pastures, which the Commoners wanted for the use of their own stock. But there is little doubt that the removal process was only imperfectly performed, and in any case it was a good many years ago.

Deer are mostly to be found in the deep woods such as Boldrewood and Knightwood, but they congregate greatly at Denny Lodge. They are only occasionally to be seen on the southern Forest plain where the feed is scarce and the country too open for their liking. They have regular "beats," as it were, and the experienced forester can always tell roughly where a small herd may be found. Apart from the hunting, they were left alone in these days. It would still be difficult efficiently to prevent poaching of deer if there was any disposition for it to be practised, but that was not always the case.

Rogers records a case of an expert in the matter of taking deer who was said to have accounted for five hundred during the five years in which he carried on operations, very often by means of an apple on a hook hung from a tree.

Such gentry had no difficulty at that time of day in disposing of the "stuff" in quarters where they knew that questions would not be asked with any hope of getting a truthful answer. Rogers records a case of one "dealer"—he could hardly be called a poacher in view of the scale of his operations—who built a vault under the hearthstone of his cottage. It was so cunningly done—the crevices were filled with pepper—that, even when bloodhounds were used and the authorities had not the very smallest doubt that they had led them truly to the place of concealment, it was impossible to obtain the necessary evidence. He never was caught.

Another clever "wholesaler" regularly invited those who sought for information concerning his movements

to have a drink out of a cask of cider which he possessed. The size of the cask was a surprise, but it never provoked active inquiry until, as the result of an overheard remark, it was investigated, when it was found that only half of it contained cider, the other half, partitioned off, being the place of hiding for dead meat, which would have been disposed of as soon as the restless voice of authority had been temporarily stilled.

But those days have gone long since. Buck are taken by authority still for official purposes—the Royal household is occasionally supplied—and provision is also made for the yearly distribution of venison to those who are the successors in title of folk who had rights in this direction, or at least had that kind of right which came as the result of long-established custom—a custom with the force of law, as the legal theorists would say.

To-day the deer have only natural enemies to contend with—the buckhounds—for though they very occasionally approach the haunts of human kind, and at such times break into fields of standing corn, it is but rarely. More and more do they keep to the deep woods, away from the strange humans who in addition to riding horses have now taken to winding their noisy way with snorting, shining engines through the glades. Not long ago I saw a hind in Mark Ash, quite close to the rough highway which passes through. I don't know whether the car in which I was a passenger was the first she had ever seen, but it is a fact that she did what I have never seen her kind do before, stand stock-still as if hypnotized and then turn at only a few paces distance and lollop gently away into the scrub. The traveller who seeks Forest joys upon the main road will probably never see deer unless he comes across a company of them moving by night from one wood to another, while the folk who see the Forest

from the chars-à-bancs will never even have such an experience as was recently mine, because happily these Juggernauts are forbidden to use the trackways across the enclosures.

Badgers are fairly plentiful in the Forest, but in the more remote parts. They have never been systematically dealt with, except when their numbers showed signs of increasing unduly, for it has been held that they do only trifling damage. Mr. Lascelles thought that such ought to be protected in a State Forest, and he only authorized digging when it was necessary. Of course, occupiers of land within the Forest pleased themselves in matters of this sort, but opportunities were few. I only remember being a spectator of badger digging on one occasion.

Mr. Lascelles tells a little story of badger digging which is worth quoting because it throws more light on his own character—though he didn't mention it with this intention—than it does upon the character of the badger.

"When any badger digging was going on," he says in his book, "I always stipulated that it should be superintended either by myself or by one of the head-keepers, who had my orders how to proceed. I always instructed him to take the badger into his own possession, unharmed (for you cannot injure badgers by digging down to them with the aid of little dogs—their immensely tough hides protect them far too well for that), and as a rule he was ordered to turn him down quietly in the evening, or to bring him to me. I suppose I must have turned out upwards of a score of badgers in the little park in front of King's House, when it was dark enough for them to get away in safety. They were very soon back in the earth they had come from, however far away it was."

Of the other wild life of the Forest, there are otters to be found upon most of the brown Forest streams and there are hares upon most of the occupied land as well as rabbits everywhere, especially in the sandy

south. But they do not favour any particular district. Even upon the main roads they are constantly seen, especially at night, fascinated by the head-lights of motor-cars, and not infrequently meeting sudden death in this way.

CHAPTER XXII

FOREST SPORT

History of Deer-hunting—Charles I and the Chase—What a Stuart Meet was like—The Lords Warden and the Hunt—The Royal Buckhounds—The rival Packs—Famous Masters of the Buckhounds.

THE sporting history of the New Forest is worthy of a book instead of a section of one, because of the range of sporting interests which are involved and because of the bearing of sport in the more general sense in the story of the Forest.

Naturally hunting comes first, since the Forest was first set apart as a hunting ground, but there are some other aspects full of interest for the student of sporting ways in the remote past as well as for practitioners of half a dozen forms of it in these crowded times.

It is not to be supposed for a moment that the man who hunts in High Leicestershire or in other parts of the favoured shires will concede that Forest hunting is as good as that available on those rolling lands, but there are Foresters who will maintain, in spite of all that has been said or will be said concerning the superlative quality of hunting with the famous packs, that their brand is the very best in the world, that Forest foxes are the stoutest and the wiliest, and that only the very best horsemen can extract the full flavour out of Forest hunting.

It is a fact, which can be interpreted to the taste of the reader, that each year towards late April the fields in the Forest include many of those whose names are prominent in the modern history of hunting, members of the famous packs all over the Midlands. It is no unusual circumstance to find three or four Masters out with the Forest packs at that time.

One reason is that Forest hunting lasts a little longer. When the plough-land is no longer available Forest hunting is not only possible but at its most enjoyable. You will not find in all England better horsemanship than may be seen in the Forest in the late months, or finer hunting.

All this has bearing upon the quality of the sport to be found in the Forest, a point which, in the view of the Forester, needs no defence at all. What I am concerned about in this place is to show something of its story and its tradition, and from that point of view it is necessary to deal with the hunting of the deer first, because that is much more deeply rooted and, from the historical point of view, of much greater consequence.

What the hunting practice in the earliest days of the Forest may have been we do not know in detail. Those who have written about Rufus, from the Chroniclers downwards, have been at pains to discuss the manner of his death, but none among them took the trouble to tell us anything of the manner of his hunting. We know that he was a bad king. What was his skill as a sportsman ? It is a question which must be left unanswered. What sort of sporting tradition he inherited we do not know either, but we do know that his enthusiasm for the chase was transmitted to his sons, for two, if not three others of his immediate line, were killed while hunting in the Forest, which was taken to mean, in the days of superstition, that William II deserved to die, though an equally reason-

able interpretation might be that he and they were not as skilful as they might have been.

Hunting of some sort there was in those early years without a doubt, but it was not by a pack of hounds, since these were not used for the purposes of the chase till very much later. If it was a form of stalking, it was not likely to have resulted in very much slaughter among the deer, having regard to the kind of weapons which were available, and the chances are that the deer increased so rapidly that the sporting side of it was not very important.

The only thing that is reasonably certain about it is that most of the English kings were particular in seeing that their rights to preserve the deer in the New Forest were strictly cared for. They may not have wanted to hunt, but they wanted the deer, and no doubt left the actual details of the chase to their representatives on the spot.

The first king who personally hunted in the Forest, apparently, was Charles I, for Mr. Lascelles found among the records of which, as Deputy-Surveyor, he was the custodian, a reference to the use of timber for making bridges and causeways in order that the king might find a safe footing over the bogs of the Forest. They exist still, these sturdily made causeways, and one near Matley, Mr. Lascelles thinks, must have been one of them, because it was called "King's Passage."

I have spoken earlier of the visit of Charles II. He it was who gave the order for the enlargement of King's House and the building of stables on a scale which suggested that it was his royal intention to revive the glories of the chase in the Forest.

A wonderful spectacle a Stuart meet must have been with the full-skirted coats of Forest green, plumed hats, snowy ruffs, and the rattle of the cavalcade down the narrow High Street between the curtsying

country-folk greeting the gallant, handsome monarch as he swings gaily out with his court to the Forest, with a kind of guard of honour of groom-keepers, and with the gentlemen of the household and of the Forest in attendance.

But these must have been in the nature of state visits in which there was less hunting done than inspection, and more entertaining than either.

The Lords Warden were sometimes hunting folk, but there is no record that they hunted hounds themselves.

Hunting of deer, *sub rosa*, there probably was a hundred years ago, but not with any local pack of buckhounds. Once or twice in the last century (August 1863 was the first date) the Royal Buckhounds were sent into the Forest country from Windsor to hunt the red deer, which existed then in much greater numbers than now, and these were tremendous occasions in New Forest story. Mr. Lascelles mentions in his book that one meet at Lyndhurst in the thirties of the last century was attended by a couple of thousand people, so that it became a great pageant of the chase rather than an occasion for serious sport.

Thereafter the Royal pack came several times, always attended by a great gathering from all over the county. The Forest keepers were required to attend in full uniform, and it may be that the practice, which is still observed, of keepers attending the buckhounds meets, dated from that time.

But this was only casual hunting, interesting to Foresters because it contained at least the hint that the old glories of the hunt in the Forest were to be revived under the direct personal auspices of the Crown. But nothing of the sort happened.

Modern Forest deer-hunting dates from mid-Victorian times. When, as the result of the constant rows between the Crown and the Commoners, the

deer were, so to speak, " outlawed " in 1851, it was necessary to get them under in one way or another, and, in addition to such official methods as were employed, there was a measure of hunting, sometimes with bloodhounds, in which Forest residents indulged. It was quite unofficial, but authority was not disposed to reject any help in a difficult task. In a very little while it became rather a nuisance. Several landowners within the Forest, maintaining a few couples of hounds, went into the sport, claiming rights in that they had thought of it first.

The matter had to be settled, as Mr. Lascelles records, by interference by the Crown, which, instead of putting down deer-hunting with a heavy hand, gave it some sort of status by insisting that there should be but one pack hunting under Mr. Morant of Brokenhurst Park, or under his near neighbour and friend, Mr. Lovell of Hincheslea. The latter was once described by the Rev. T. F. Dale as a master of woodcraft, and it may be said of him that he was the inspiration of modern buck-hunting in the Forest.

The story of what followed—the constant friction between those whose interests were in deer-hunting, and those who were supporters of fox-hunting and that alone—has been told in some detail in Mr. Lascelles' book. He knew better than anybody the ins and outs of that tangled skein because it was his duty to unravel it. It is a tribute to his very great tact that he was able to do so, and in such a way that he retained the firm appreciation and friendship of both parties to what was very like a quarrel.

It must have been a matter of very considerable difficulty to reconcile the interests of four and sometimes five packs of hounds, and an attempt which was made before Mr. Lascelles was called in to make some sort of peace had the effect only of increasing the trouble. The Commissioner of Woods and Forest

was the final authority, and he had delegated his powers in this matter to the then Master of the Foxhounds, which was the senior pack in the Forest, and had well established and definite rights. Perhaps this is not quite the place to deal with these matters, but the history of the deerhounds is very much bound up with it, and the record would not be complete without some reference to it.

The plan which was devised in order that peace should be established among the hunting folk, was that the recognized pack, that of which Mr. Lovell was Master, should hunt under certain restrictions in the spring, and that Mr. Mills of Bisterne, who had been hunting with a pack of harriers, should have a recognized country in what may be called that corner of the Forest. It failed to settle anything, because there was so much bad blood about it all that nobody would see reason.

"The battles of the Montagues and the Capulets," says Mr. Lascelles, "were nothing to it, and I, without the slightest knowledge of all this turmoil and bad blood, was launched into the thick of it, in complete ignorance of the temperature of the hot water into which I was officially desired to plunge. Very hot it was too."

However, tact proved to be the solvent, and now the two packs live in peace and amity with each other, supported very largely by the same folk, and uniting amiably and happily for all sorts of social purposes.

But let me get back to the earlier history of the buckhounds and the pack's distinguished masters. The first Master of the Buckhounds, when they were formally established after a period during which they were used to hunt the outlawed deer without any very elaborate organization, was Capt. Buckworth Powell, a member of a family which has rendered very distinguished service to the cause of hunting in the Forest, which has served, indeed, for generations, either as

Masters or Hunt Secretaries. Capt. Buckworth Powell lived at Foxlease, and in the early days the hunting which he provided, though interesting and sometimes thrilling, was on a small scale, for his hounds were few. Mr. Francis Lovell was able to secure the establishment of the pack on more formal lines. A Committee was appointed to hunt the country, and hounds were kept at that time at Hincheslea. Mr. Lovell hunted the pack himself, though occasionally, when he was unable to do so, Mr. Lascelles lent a hand, and when the pack was hunted by one of the hunt servants, Mr. Lascelles occasionally acted as field master.

Three notable days with the buckhounds mentioned by Mr. Lascelles are worth quoting from his book, because they show the kind of sport which was offered in the middle eighties with this pack. On one day in the spring of 1885 or 1886 hounds ran hard in the morning for forty-five minutes and killed an old buck, and in the afternoon ran a buck from Rhinefield down into the Avon Valley beyond High Wood, and, turning back to the Forest, bayed him at seven o'clock in the stream by Burley Manor. There was another in the same year (1886), a nine-mile point from Busketts to Linford, and a kill after a two hours' hunt.

Mr. Lovell's Mastership extended in all from the late 'fifties right into the early 'nineties, good sport being shown year after year, the pack being built up by drafts from other hunts, until the Buckhounds were something to be proud of. When Mr. Lovell gave up in 1893, Mr. Edward Walker, formerly of the Croome, took over the hunt. In the next season he was joined by Mr. E. F. Kelly, but after a single season of joint Mastership, Mr. Kelly became sole Master, and hunted hounds till 1901, when Mr. O. T. Price, who lived at New Park, took them over. It was during his Mastership that hounds were established in their

quarters at New Park. For nine successful years Mr. Price hunted the Buckhounds, rendering also, during that time and since, very useful service in connection with the maintenance of the standard of Forest ponies. It was at his retirement that the present Master, Sir George Thursby, before he succeeded to the title, became associated with the Buckhounds in a joint Mastership with Major Timson, whose family had also rendered long and meritorious service to sport in the New Forest. Mr. Thursby acted as his own huntsman, and Major Timson took charge of the tufting. Both were supreme at their job. It was said by Mr. Lascelles that Mr. Thursby, as he was then, was the best and quickest gentleman huntsman he had ever seen or heard of, except, perhaps, the late Sir Charles Slingsby.

A couple of years later Mr. Thursby took over the sole control, acting still as his own huntsman, and, except for the war interval, has maintained his association with them. The New Forest Buckhounds are famous to-day, not alone because of the skill of their Master, Sir George Thursby, but because of the way in which he built up the pack before the war, and sought to restore it when, at the war's end, it was possible to set about the work of giving hunting its proper place in the scheme of things.

CHAPTER XXIII

FOREST SPORT (*continued*)

Fox-hunting—The Lord Warden's Pack—Early Masterships —" Nimrod " in the Forest—Two Hunt Secretaries in Seventy Years—" Red-letter Days."

ALTHOUGH there was deer-hunting in the Forest by the Royal Buckhounds, and by occasional visiting packs long before fox-hunting was established in the Forest country, the Foxhounds are the senior pack. Both packs wear the button with the Crown and Stirrup upon it, the right of the Foxhounds to do so dating apparently from the time that they were hunted by Mr. H. V. Gilbert, round about 1784, when they were regarded as more or less official and were given that style by the Lord Warden of the time. Some sort of authoritative arrangement was necessary because other packs of foxhounds were in the habit of visiting the Forest under authority from the Crown or the Lord Warden, and there was a certain clashing of interests, apart from the fact that the country was probably being over-hunted. Accordingly the then Lord Warden, the Duke of Gloucester, issued what was quaintly described as an " Advertisement " (quoted by both Sir Reginald Graham in his book of Recollections and by Mr. Lascelles), which ran as follows :

" No hounds are to be permitted to hunt in the New Forest except the Lord Warden's, and (if he should choose to come)

the Duke of Richmond's, but in the month of April, viz. from the 1st till the 30th, both days inclusive.

"That no pack be suffered to go out more than three times in one week, and, to prevent confusion, it is agreed that the Lord Warden's are to hunt Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Mr. Grove's to hunt Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, and no more than two packs of hounds to be in the Forest at the same time. Any strange pack must give way for the time, that there may be no more than two packs at one time.

"The earths not to be stopt till half-past four in the morning, and no hounds to be thrown off before five.

"The earths during the month of April not to be stopt, but by the keepers or their servants.

"The keepers have orders not to suffer any fires to be lighted on the earths, nor any person to stand on the earth to keep out the foxes; no tarriers to be taken out or foxes dug in the month of April."

The arrangement is quoted in full in spite of its ambiguity in several respects, because it shows that authority, as represented by the Lord Warden, was amiably disposed towards fox-hunting, though possibly his own predilections may have been towards the hunting of the deer. With that public statement of policy, if it may be so described, was a letter which seems to give not only fox-hunting, but the pack which was at that time hunted by Mr. Gilbert, some sort of fixed status.

It was signed by the Duke's equerry, and was dated from Southampton, which the Duke was fond of visiting, that town having at that time ambitions in the way of becoming a health resort, a sort of rival to Bath. It was as follows:

"The keepers and others in the New Forest having represented to His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester the great scarcity of foxes at present in the country, he thinks it proper to revise some regulations that were agreed to with the Duke of Richmond and Lord Eglinton when they had liberty to bring their hounds in the Forest. He wishes also to add a little to the regulations, as the necessity appears greater at this time.

"As your hounds have occasionally been in the Forest (the

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letter was apparently sent to the Masters of all the occasional packs), he commands me to send you a copy of the regulations, and he hopes, as the Forest hounds will strictly adhere to them, there will be no objection on your part.

"The Lord Warden has given his name to Mr. Gilbert's hounds, and for the future he will look upon them as the established pack of the country, but does not mean to prevent your hounds coming out under the enclosed regulations."

Thus was a situation which had been full of difficulty settled, for it may be assumed that the visiting packs came into line, since the records are silent about it. Mr. Gilbert, who lived at Lamb's Corner, afterwards known as Bartley Lodge, continued to hunt his pack under royal and official patronage as it were for a couple of years, after which, at a meeting which was held at Romsey, then the head-quarters of the pack, the New Forest Hunt Club was established, Mr. Gilbert continuing in control and remaining so until about 1798 or 1800, when Mr. John Compton, of Minstead Manor, took charge, and it is an interesting coincidence which may be conveniently noted here, that it was exactly a hundred years later that another Compton held the Mastership, in the person of Mr. Henry F. Compton, the present Lord of the Manor of Minstead.

Mr. John Compton's tenure was of two years' length and thereafter for a time the official pack of foxhounds was hunted by a Committee of which the Earl of Cavan, who lived at Eaglehurst, near Calshot, was one of the members.

A famous early master of the New Forest Hounds was Mr. John Warde (1808–14), whose name was legendary in fox-hunting a hundred years ago, and who put in over thirty years of Mastership with various packs. For several years he hunted from King's House where hounds were kennelled, and later from Foxlease. Mr. Nichol, who succeeded him in 1814, and was Master for fourteen years, also hunting from

Lyndhurst, held one of the longest Masterships in New Forest hunting history.

A very interesting and informative picture of hunting in the Forest and of the chief personages during that time, as well as an admirable portrait of Mr. Nichol, was written by "Nimrod," most famous of sporting writers, round about 1825, in the "Sporting Reminiscences of Hampshire." "Nimrod's" asides are very refreshing, even though they indicate his prejudices, but above all else they are illuminating.

"Mr. Nichol looks like a true-born Englishman who is not ashamed of his country—which is more than we can say of all we meet. He is not a dandy we must admit; he has cultivated his mind more than his dress, and amongst other accomplishments Mr. Nichol is a poet of a very pretty turn. As a master of foxhounds, however, I saw nothing in the least magisterial or imperious in the field; on the contrary, he was polite and obliging to all. As a companion Mr. Nichol is a man of great readiness of wit and a happy quickness of reply."

"Nimrod" provides an example of the latter quality, and the fact that this particular story has been told of many Masters does not destroy its validity; indeed, it may very well be that Mr. Nichol's part in it was the first and that the others were the plagiarists. However, here is the story, the victim of it, in the "Nimrod" version, being a Southampton barber:

"A well-dressed man had one day been pressing closely on his hounds, so closely that nothing but Job could stand it any longer, and Mr. Nichol bestowed upon him a few hearty 'damns.' The offender rode up to him and said: 'My word, Mr. Nichol, I don't understand this: I didn't come out to be damned.' 'Then go home and be damned,' replied Mr. Nichol."

"Nimrod's" characteristic grumble about the scarcity of foxes and his general impressions of the New Forest country, may also be conveniently quoted here.

"Lamentable scarcity of foxes," he says. "To such an extent has the unhappy mania for pheasants increased in the Forest that no sooner does a fox stray out of it than he is in a trap. From all I have heard, indeed, I have good reason to believe that were it not for the kindness of H.R.H. the Duke of York, Head Warden of the Forest . . . Mr. Drummond . . . and others well disposed to fox-hunting, there would not be a fox in the country, though the lying for them exceeds anything I have ever witnessed before. Brother sportsmen, mind this—fox-hunting trembles in the beam, and I think I hear hundreds of the rising generation exclaim: The sooner it kicks the better, for it is too rough an amusement for us."

That was the genial "Nimrod" in his less happy moments. As a recorder of contemporary sport he was probably without rival, but as a prophet he had his limitations. Could he have foreseen that exactly one hundred years after, and notwithstanding the incidence of a war which necessitated the putting down of fox-hunting with a rigorous hand, New Forest hunting would have the strength and popularity which it enjoys at this moment, he would have been a happier man.

"Nimrod's" description of the Forest country has, however, sufficient accuracy. It might have been written in 1925 instead of a full hundred years earlier.

"The New Forest is a very awkward country to get across, and one in which, in my opinion, there is no great enjoyment of hounds when they go the pace. Fences are generally to be managed, but bogs require wings: and as hearts of oak are rather harder than men's skulls another difficulty presents itself in the wooded parts—a tree is to be encountered at every fourth stride of the horse. Horses that are used to all this soon become wonderfully handy, but taking it altogether the Forest is a distressing country to them, although they get a few chances in their favour by foxes running short, which from the nature of the country they must do."

During the latter part of Mr. Nichol's Mastership hounds were kept at Bramshaw, but as time went on this plan of moving hounds every time there was a

change of Mastership was found to be very inconvenient, and the present kennels were built, the land at Furzey Lawn having been made available by the Compton family for use in this way as long as it should be required for the purpose.

At the end of the long reign of Mr. Nichol hounds were sold to Lord Kintore for £1,000, but the hunt was continued, and has indeed suffered no real break since it was formed. Mr. William Wyndham, who also lived at Bramshaw, took over the country and showed good sport for ten years, being succeeded by Mr. Codrington, who also lived at Burnford House, Bramshaw, and who had a four years' Mastership. He was succeeded by Captain Shedden, who was Master for eleven years.

Many of the Masters of these, the middle years, bore names held then, and still, in the highest honour in the Forest. Of such was the Rev. Edward Timson, of Tatchbury—whose family link is still close. He had a six years' Mastership in the 'fifties. Then there was Captain Morant, of Brokenhurst Park, a very skilful Forest huntsman, who was in charge for nine years, from 1860 till 1869; and Mr. W. C. Standish, who followed him. The latter was the bearer of a name greatly revered in hunting circles all over Hampshire, and especially in the Hambledon country, where other members of his family have held long Masterships. Mr. Standish hunted hounds for five years and then yielded place to Sir Reginald Graham, who has told the story of his taking over the pack in his notable book of Fox-hunting Recollections. He had come into the Forest for a day, more or less casually, to see Lord Wolverton's bloodhounds, which had been brought over the Dorset border for a day amongst the deer.

"I heard by chance," he says, "that Mr. Standish was giving up the hounds and had already agreed to sell his pack

and go to Ireland. In those days, ever ready to take a fresh country, I jumped at the offer and suddenly found myself M.F.H. in the New Forest country."

Sir Reginald had to get a fresh pack together. He bought seventy couples for £500 from the Craven, and Mr. Chaplin, afterwards Lord Chaplin, who had a very varied collection of hounds, gave him eighteen couples. By weeding out the less satisfactory of his batch, Sir Reginald soon had a fine pack of fifty couples. In the season 1874–5 Sir Reginald Graham hunted hounds on ninety-six days, killing thirty-eight foxes and being stopped on twelve days by reason of frost. "The New Forest is a most difficult country to catch foxes," he says, though he was not the first Master to make the discovery.

"In the first place it is almost impossible to stop it properly. There are always holes and corners which nobody ever knew of before, and then there are the innumerable drains in the big enclosures, frequently 6 or 8 feet deep."

Sir Reginald, whose hounds were known as the "Fast Ladies," had a better season in the following year, as he shows in his book. Hounds were out on eighty-nine days, and killed forty-seven foxes, but it was an exceptionally wild winter, and hunting was not possible on many days.

Sir Reginald, who married during his stay in the Forest and lived thereafter at Fritham Lodge, gave up after four years, the bitch pack passing to Mr. George Meyrick, of Hinton Admiral, whose reign was full of interest and very good hunting, and the dog hounds going in part to the Pytchley, and some to Pau, where Lord Howth at that time had a pack. Sir George Meyrick is the father of the present Master, Major George Meyrick, the only case in recent Forest history of father and son having the hounds, though the Comptons and the Powells furnish instances of

hereditary succession, not, however, in successive generations.

Mr. Lascelles, who came into the Forest about this time (1878), makes an interesting reference to what was really a new regime in the Forest.

"No expense was spared," he says, "to organize a good pack of hounds. A commencement was made by the purchase of the bitch pack from Sir Reginald Graham, the retiring Master. Then other hounds were lavishly procured and large drafts, notably from the Grafton, were obtained."

When Sir George Meyrick gave up the country was divided in circumstances which Mr. Lascelles has recorded.

"The western half was taken over by Mr. John Mills (of Bisterne), who sacrificed his perfect little pack of harriers and got together the best pack of foxhounds that he could, while the eastern half . . . was taken over by Major Brown of Hall Court, who came into the country with a small bitch pack of his own."

However, a new pack, owned by the Committee, was soon gathered together, Mr. Lascelles having a hand in this, and Mr. Bradburne, who was the next Master, enjoyed a three years' tenure, Mr. Stanley Pearce of Testwood following him, and hunting the eastern portion for five years more. In the meantime Mr. Mills, who maintained the western pack for five or six years, was succeeded by Sir John Thursby (Sir George Thursby, the present Master of the Buckhounds, hunting them), good sport being shown by this very admirable arrangement until 1895, when Mr. Henry Martin Powell of Wilverley, who has been described as the best woodland huntsman who ever lived in the Forest, took over the whole country, hunting three days a week.

Mr. Powell had a remarkable family association with the pack and with Forest hunting. Captain Buckworth Powell, who lived at Foxlease, was associ-

ated with the early days of the Buckhounds, and his own father, Colonel Martin Powell, whose home was at Brooklands, was the Honorary Secretary of the Hunt Club for thirty-four years. "There never was a better Hunt Secretary," said Sir Reginald Graham concerning him. Season after season, in time of ease and in times of great difficulty, he carried out duties always onerous and sometimes calling for the diplomatic skill of an ambassador with never-failing good humour, to the complete satisfaction not only of successive Masters, but two generations of hunting folks as well.

The New Forest country has had the benefit of many and very distinguished Masters, a surprising proportion of them being Forest men, but there is probably no other pack in the country which, during a period of seventy years, has had the good fortune to have had only two Hunt Secretaries. When Colonel Martin Powell, whose memory is fragrant from one end of the Forest to the other, gave up, he was succeeded by Mr. Ernest Wingrove of Ashurst. That was thirty-six years ago, and ever since Mr. Wingrove has carried on the duties with an intense devotion to the best interests of fox-hunting in the Forest, and, indeed, to the hunting world in general.

A son of Mr. Drummond Wingrove of Langley, and a grandson of the Rev. John Lukin of Nursling, Mr. Ernest Wingrove was elected Secretary of the Hunt in 1887 during the Mastership of Mr. Bradburne, who was at that time hunting the eastern pack, Mr. Mills being in control in the west. Mr. Wingrove frequently acted as field master, and more than once had sole control of hounds, one such occasion being during the South African war, and again in the European war. His fame rests, however, upon his rare tact and friendliness towards every lover of hunting who comes into the Forest, and his remarkable knowledge of that

beautiful country. He is the Chairman of the Hunt Secretaries' Association, and as such is known and beloved of hunting people all over the country. The best description I know of Mr. Wingrove is that which was used by Mr. Horace Annesley Vachell in his novel "The Yard," where he is described as the Nestor of the Hunt. The description fits him with precision. Mr. Wingrove will not mind it being said of him that he has regarded it as his life's task to show good sport in the Forest, and the proof that he has succeeded is contained in the great popularity of the pack in the minds of hunting people all over the country, and in the fact that there are no more efficiently managed hounds in the land.

However, to get back to the story of the hounds in these latter days. When Mr. Henry Powell gave up the horn, Colonel Godfrey Heseltine and Captain Christopher Heseltine, who at that time lived at Walhampton, took over control, Captain Heseltine hunting one pack, and Hutchings, the huntsman, the other. The South African war put an end to that very happy arrangement, and after the interval, which has already been mentioned, Mr. Henry F. Compton of Minstead Manor became Master, hunting one pack himself, and Jones, then huntsman, hunting the other.

On Mr. Compton's retirement Mr. Powell served a second term, being followed by Mr. Walter Cazenove, sometime Master of the Woodland Pytchley and the Wilton, who showed excellent sport for four or five years. Thereafter there was another joint Mastership, hounds being taken over by Captain J. Cooke Hurle and Colonel E. F. Cooke Hurle, who had been joint masters of the Lamerton. This lasted for two years until 1913, when Colonel Cooke Hurle took charge until the war resulted in hunting being practically stopped. Major Meyrick's Mastership began after the war.

KEYHAVEN: NEAR HURST CASTLE

There are on record, or in the remembrance of the veteran members of the Hunt Club, some special "days," the briefest outline of which I am tempted to include in this sketch of a hundred years of hunting in the Forest. Two, dating back to the 'seventies, were during the Mastership of Sir Reginald Graham, and he has himself put them on record. There was a very memorable November meet in 1875 at Lyndhurst Road, which in these days as in those, no doubt, implied a big field. Deerleap was blank that day, though it is often otherwise, but the pack found in Busketts and ran hard through Irons Hill and out into the open, turning towards Pond Head, nearly to the Brockenhurst road, and then back, killing near Bolton's Bench, under three miles as the crow flies, but very much longer in fact. What rendered that day a red-letter one was the fact that the fox was a veteran of many hunts, known as "Dr. Kenealy."

Another was in the following year—a bitter February day of heavy snow, so bad that nearly everybody went back home from the meet, which was at Brockenhurst Bridge. But the outlook got a little better and a tiny field went on with it, that very famous sportsman, Sir Claude de Crespigny, among the number. From the Brockenhurst covers hounds raced away to Boldre, and then by Stockley, Frame Wood, and Pigbush, back to Woodfidley and Denny—a hunt of an hour less five minutes.

"I never saw anything so fast before," Sir Reginald Graham wrote. "Sir Claude de Crespigny and I were the only two at the finish, and he helped me to get the hounds back to kennels, for both whippers-in were lost."

Then there was one in the same bright period of Forest hunting story of which Sir Reginald Graham has recorded details. The meet was at Ower. Hounds found at Embley, and the fox headed for the fields towards Pauncefote Hill and then to Greenhill and the

meadows. There a crowd headed him, and he ran towards Greatbridge, the kill being in the neighbourhood of Timsbury Mill.

In the same neighbourhood a Fritham meet, and a find at Sloden, was followed by a brisk thirty-three minutes' hunt across the open to a kill between Gorley and Fordingbridge.

In 1875 the Duke of Beaufort brought his famous pack into the Forest for a couple of meets, one at Fritham and the other at Brockenhurst Bridge. All the big houses of the Forest were filled with guests, a great field including representatives from the Isle of Wight, the Hampshire Hunt, the Hambledon, the South and West Wilts, the East Dorset and Lord Radnor's. There were 2,000 people at one of these meets, and from 600 to 700 riders.

These last few and rather more recent examples were recalled by Mr. Ernest Wingrove when not long ago hunting men in the Forest met to mark his thirty-six years' service as Hunt Secretary and Field Master :

From a covert near Fawley (the Calshot side) to Holbury, thence over Hythe plain through the Nodes, to kill near the Beaulieu-road ; from Deerleap via Ferney Croft and the big woods, to a kill at Mill Copse, near Boldre Church ; from Latchmoor Bog to the Bentleys, through Blackwool and Shave Green, to kill at Brockis Hill, from the big woods via Pennerley and Ipley, to the Nodes, and across Hythe Plain, to kill at Ipers Bridge ; from Paultons via Cadnam Bog, Warrens, Kings Garden, the Bentleys, and Amberwood, to kill on the top of Hampton Ridge, near Ashley Lodge ; from Ashley Lodge, to kill at Minstead Manor ; from Minstead Manor via Fritham Plain, to kill at Hampworth Franchise ; from Culverley, to kill at Austins ; from the Nodes via Ipley, Deerleap, and Lodge Hill inclosure, to kill in Rushpole Wood, near the Kennels.

The New Forest is delightful hunting country, for while woodland predominates in the central parts, requiring a knowledgeable horse and woodland sense on the part of the rider, there are plenty of meets in the course of the season which will accommodate the man who wants to ride. The moor country is delightful.

For strangers the New Forest country is full of the possibilities of excitement, for the bogs, which the Forester accepts without thinking about them, are capable of providing a lot of trouble to the unwary. It would be going too far to say that there is actual danger of engulfment in any of the Forest bogs, but hunting people have before to-day had alarming experiences in them, and if no worse befell, they have lost many a good day's sport by reason of indiscretion in crossing promising and green-looking country. The Forester doesn't do it, and any Forest horse will avoid those rich green flats where the cotton-grass waves and which offer seductive short cuts on occasion. To be bogged is not, however, a very frequent occurrence, for every hunting Forester regards it as a duty to see that visitors do not get themselves into trouble and go away with false ideas of Forest hospitality.

There is other hunting in variety to be had within the Forest or its neighbourhood. There is the Hursley country on the North, running through the Test Valley and central Hampshire; the Portman, over the Dorset border, and the Wilton, which is just across into Wiltshire; and in addition there is some pleasant beagling and otter-hunting, the latter being occasional.

The Courtenay Tracy Otterhounds, though headquartered in Wiltshire, has, however, many close Forest associations. Mr. Lascelles had a good deal to do with its inauguration in a modern sense, for he was able to persuade Major Geoffrey Hill to bring his famous Hawkestone Otterhounds into the Forest, but he had ill luck with rabies, as Mr. Lascelles records

in his book, and had to give up the idea of hunting the Forest streams. On Major Hill's advice, Mr. Collier of the Culmstock was approached and came year by year into the Forest for a short season, his nephew following his admirable example when he had to give up.

But the fame of otter-hunting in the Forest was growing, and when Mr. Courtenay Tracy established a South-country pack, head-quartered at Wilton, the New Forest streams was added to his especial area.

Mr. Courtenay Tracy provided admirable sport on the Forest streams for several years, and the pack still bears his name and comes into the Forest every season though its founder gave up hunting them before the war.

The story of the harriers and the beagles is an interesting one. At one time one of the best packs of harriers in the country hunted the western Forest under Mr. Mills of Bisterne, until he gave them up on taking over a part of the country for the Foxhounds. It was a beautiful pack and rare sport was shown during the years that they ran the western Forest.

Rather more than twenty years ago beagling was revived in the Forest by Mr. O. T. Price, and the pack was run by Mrs. Price for several years, Mr. Price hunting them for a year or so also. Then Mr. Fred Day took them over, hunting chiefly in the neighbourhood of Lyndhurst, but occasionally going to other parts of the Forest and not infrequently outside to the down-country round about Bishop's Waltham. Now the country is hunted by Captain Keith Gladstone, who took over the Leigh Park Beagles in the Havant neighbourhood and hunted from Roke Manor, near Romsey, and later from Moortown House, Ringwood, the pack being called, successively, the Roke Manor and Ringwood Beagles. Now it has returned to the original name—the New Forest Beagles.

CHAPTER XXIV

FOREST SPORT (*continued*)

Shooting—Fishing—Golf—Cricket.

SPLENDID shooting is possible in the Forest under special licence available to anybody on conditions which most sportsmen can satisfy. Some attempts have been made at different times to preserve within the Forest, with very considerable success in certain directions, but generally speaking the game within the Forest is that which is natural.

In the old days when visitors to the Forest were few there was very little organized sport of this sort. The officers of the Forest, from the Lord Warden downwards, no doubt laid toll upon the game for their own purposes, and it was the practice for the Lord Warden to give permission to shoot to various people, among them being the Lord Mayor of London. The same sort of authority was granted to many landowners within the Forest on payment of a fee.

Mr. Lascelles shows that this payment was at the rate of one guinea a year with an entrance fee of £5, which was paid over to a fund set up for the maintenance of the widows of the Forest keepers. There was a limit to the number of licensees under this arrangement, and very soon a waiting list. It was provided that shooting should take place in moderation, and it was very rare that any breach of a reasonable rule in this regard occurred.

But that plan no longer obtains. Shooting rights at present are granted under an arrangement which was come to, as Mr. Lascelles shows, when Claremont passed into the personal possession of Queen Victoria, in exchange for the surrender of the right, which rested with Her Majesty, to grant shooting licences in the Forest. Now the fee is £20 a year, or £30 for a double licence, which permits the first licensee, being a resident, to take a friend with him.

Mr. Lascelles, when Deputy-Surveyor, had an admirable system of restocking with pheasants, for there was a time some years ago when the head of game in the Forest got rather low, even the rabbits falling off quite considerably. In modern times, however, licensees have been able to make up a bag of about 100 pheasants in a season, while rabbits are available in any quantity.

There is a fair head of snipe in the Forest as well as teal and duck, though both these and woodcock show a slightly diminishing tendency. Quail, blackcock and widgeon are rarer.

Wild-fowl in the Forest have provided rare sport on occasion. Mr. Lascelles mentioned that it was their habit to congregate thickly on the Minstead Mill pond, where he has seen a hundred brought down in twenty-five minutes.

There is some attractive wild-fowling also on the Forest coasts—widgeon, geese and duck—but sport on the wide sea flats is apt to be over-exciting. Gilpin draws a pathetic picture of the fowler, who at night, having fired his piece more or less at a venture, puts on his pattens and goes off into the dark, groping about for the results, picking up perhaps a dozen and perhaps none at all: "so hardly does the poor fowler earn a few shillings, exposed in an open boat during a solitary winter night to the weather as it comes, rain, hail or snow, on a bleak coast, a league perhaps from

the beach and often in danger, if he fails to exercise great care, of being fixed in the mud, where he would become an inevitable prey to the incoming tide. I have heard one of these poor fellows say he never takes a dog with him on these expeditions because no dog could bear the cold that he is obliged to suffer."

The chronicler provides an actual instance of this sort of thing. A fowler found himself completely invested by the tide, his only hope being, so it seemed to him, to reach the highest point of the flats, and, sticking his piece in the mud, to hold fast to it until the tide should ebb. He expected that the water would but reach his waist: in fact, it touched his shoulders, being a spring tide. Thus he had to remain for another four or five hours until the tide receded and he was able to reach his boat or the shore.

There is no better record of sport in the Forest or on its border than that which was kept by the second Earl of Malmesbury, and edited by Mr. Aflalo, under the title "Half a Century of Sport in Hampshire," in which an earlier book by another member of the Harris family is quoted (as showing the sudden growth of Bournemouth) to the effect that in 1826 the then Earl shot a blackcock where St. Peter's Church at Bournemouth now stands, right in the very heart of the town. There is probably no better wild-fowl shooting on the coast of England, indeed, it has been said that the only comparable examples are those within the Forest area, at Beaulieu and at Somerley.

The journals are very mines of interest for those who are closely concerned with these matters because of their details of the bags on the Heron Court estate during so many years, and also by reason of the quaintness of the comments of the second Earl concerning his sporting experiences at home and elsewhere. One such, especially entertaining, is a record of the Earl shooting with Lord Spencer at Wimbledon (in 1802),

thus : " Odd sensation of seeing St. Paul's at the end of my gun."

There is just one other extract which needs to be quoted, more as showing the way in which the journals were kept since it is impossible to indicate their range in other respects. It bears a date a hundred years ago and reads :

" Saw a vast quantity and variety of fowl upon the Avon. A Hooper (swan) came and pitched within forty-five yards of me. I fired both barrels at him, but I might just as well have spit at him. He appeared to be of a large size, and ' hooped ' as he sat in the water, and bore a very beautiful and majestic appearance. He was afterwards shot at with ball near Christchurch. The man missed him and killed a cow."

Forest fishing is not remarkable though it can be very sporting. There are pike and carp in Sowley Pond, but it is a preserved fishery. There are trout in many if not most of the brown streams which run across the Forest, and also in some of the other ponds ; but in a county through which the Avon, the Test and the Itchen run, the Forest fishing is not likely to attract many people, except the residents and those whom rare beauty of surroundings is sufficient compensation for an empty bag.

Apart from those forms of sport, which flourish in a wild and sparsely populated area, there is every variety of those which are played or practised elsewhere. There are five golf-courses at least within the Forest, as well as one or two small ones, private in character, upon the estates, and all of them have qualities which are not to be found on more sophisticated courses. The wild beauty of that at Bramshaw, on the top of the Forest, and fairly close to Rufus Stone, is very striking, and, incidentally, it is a more than ordinarily punishing course. Its long holes are long indeed ; its short ones are broken land, more than

usually difficult. The fairways are reasonably good, but there is sad trouble away from them in the thick gorse and heather. In spite of its remoteness—there is no railway station nearer than six miles—the Bramshaw course is highly popular, not only with Forest folk but with those people from the towns, who like, if possible, to have their golf on an uncrowded course. At week-ends it is, perhaps, as thickly populated as those close to the towns, but at other times it is often possible to complete a round without seeing more than three or four players.

I once saw the Earl of Balfour get out of a car by the roadside—he was staying at the time at St. Cloud, I imagined—and indulge in a solitary round, carrying his clubs himself.

Then there is a very sporting course, across country a little less hilly perhaps, near Lyndhurst, crossing the racecourse, which is used a great deal by people living in or near the village, and a very jolly little nine-holed course at Burley. A Forest course of like character near Balmer Lawn has lost its character and reverted more or less to natural Forest again, but in its place there is a beautiful course on the Brockenhurst Manor estate near Forest Park, which may be classed as one of the best of its sort in the county. Another is at Lymington on the flats near the Solent. Then there are three fine courses, very varied in character, at Bournemouth ; one of the highest class at Broadstone, a lovely parkland course at Southampton, a small new course near Romsey, quite close to the Forest, and two downland courses near Winchester. The New Forest golfer has at least variety.

Cricket in the New Forest has a pleasantest character and a not uninteresting story. Some of the famous touring clubs find the country-house cricket in the Forest as good as anything that comes their way in the course of their amiable pilgrimages, and apart

from cricket of that particular class there is village cricket of a sort, I dare swear, not to be found anywhere in England. Village cricket in a meadow or on a barren village green may be suitable material for the pictorial humorist, but Forest village cricket is not in the least like that, because I know half a dozen Forest villages which have clubs playing on wickets as good as any in the country. Some of them play on the Forest lawns and have cared for the lovely turf until it is as true as on any of the county grounds. Swan Green, near Lyndhurst, has one such, delightfully embowered in the trees, where at any week-end a picture of immemorial England may be found. Bramshaw, on the plain, has another like a bowling green, and there is as beautiful a ground as any in England at Bolton's Bench at Lyndhurst.

And in the little towns the cricket is really serious. Two-day matches excite the whole of the people whether cricket-lovers or not, for they are social occasions. One such club has a local lawyer for its leader ; another (which includes a baronet) is led by a sporting curate of county " class " ; a third, a little way off, has a General " in command."

It may be that the Forest has produced only a few players whose names would be known as cricketers beyond its confines, but that is only a chance happening. At all events they play the game on Wednesdays and Saturdays because they love it. Leagues are unknown, professionalism is undreamed of, and generally the care of the wicket is shared by the members of the clubs, who " cut and roll " with the assiduity of a groundsman of county clubs.

Cricket, indeed, is no casual upgrowth in the Forest. Hampshire people, whether they be Foresters or not, cannot forget that cricket was born on Broadha'penny Down at Hambledon, which is not so far away as the crow flies, and many of them can remember clearly

"BOLTON'S BENCH," LYNDHURST

those spacious days in which festival cricket had a quality which now belongs to the Scarborough week. As a matter of fact, there are close links between the two. Scarborough, in a cricket sense, owes its existence to the Earls of Londesborough. So did the Forest "week" or "fortnight" fifty years ago or thereabouts. The Earl of that day had a home within the Forest at Northerwood, close to Lyndhurst and overlooking the village and the plain towards Beaulieu, and each summer for several years he made classic cricket possible in the Forest. That was in the halcyon days of Yorkshire cricket when that county side included Tom Emmett, George Ulyett, Hall, Pinder, and many others, even down to the days of Peel. All these, and other heroes of our youth, have played country-house cricket of the very jolliest sort within our Forest. Lord Londesborough was a Yorkshireman as well as a Forester by adoption and grace, and his week (or fortnight) was something which the veterans talk of still. They refuse to listen with patience when moderns talk of championship cricket. He used to bring the whole side down each year at his own cost and to pit it against a Forest eighteen or twenty-two as the case might be, and in the memorable years he was able to find a side of Foresters who could "take on" the mighty Yorkshiremen on level terms. That did not happen very often, however.

And in that day the sign-manual of importance within the Forest was to be chosen to represent the Forest side against the famous Yorkshire eleven—very giants of the game.

It doesn't sound so very impressive at this time of day, when festival cricket is an end of the season affair, but fifty years ago these things were differently ordered. Those who played against Yorkshire played for the honour of the Forest, which was a great deal

more important than any mere question of county championship, while the Yorkshiremen played because they loved cricket and because the name of Lord Londesborough was a legend in Yorkshire, even as it was in the Forest.

The seasons varied. Sometimes the Foresters were able to shake the county side. In some years, which the veterans do not remember, Emmett had things all his own way. The Foresters owed a very great deal in those days to Mr. Reginald Hargreaves of Cuffnells, where many of these classic games were played.

Mr. Hargreaves, who still lives at Cuffnells, having for half a century been an acknowledged leader of Forest field sporting interests, was a player of county class. He was for several years a member of the Hampshire side, and later in life was the President of the County Club. He generally captained the Forest fifteen or eighteen (or twenty-two, in bad years), but most of the rest of the players put in all their cricket within the Forest and never rose to the rarer atmosphere in which, in a cricket sense, their captain lived. Only one or two entered the " county class." One was Street, the Surrey bowler, who played for the Forest fifteen in 1874. Then there was the late Mr. A. F. Jeffreys, who belonged to the family seated at Canterton Manor, one of the old Forest manors for many years : he who later in life was a Privy Councillor, and a Chairman of Committees of the House of Commons, and the father of General Jeffreys, who commanded the London district until a few years ago. He, too, played for Hampshire and was often a member of the Lyndhurst side against all Yorkshire. And of course there were the Tates.

Apart from those there were several " local " people who, if they never had big chances, had names which are still held in high honour in the Forest as having

given the Yorkshiremen many a fright. Mr. Hargreaves often did, for he was a very fine bowler, but none more often than Mr. Willoughby Bryan, who lived at Lyndhurst. He was a one-armed player, a good bowler and a quite wonderful bat, for with a wrist of steel he could hit as hard as any man.

Though Mr. Hargreaves captained the New Forest sides for most of these representative matches as they may be called, one of the leading figures in New Forest history was Dr. Nunn (a mighty sportsman and a great hurdler), concerning whose capacity for hitting stories are still told. One of his methods of getting the best out of his bowlers at practice was to put coins on the middle stump which went to the bowler who uprooted it. One young bowler, who in his enthusiasm was one day bowling his heart out for the doctor, was thus adjured by one of the Tates, a band of cricketing brothers of more than Forest fame : " You're a young fool y'know. Put him up a slack-un. He'll hit it half a mile and then you'll get a rest."

These Tate brothers were all wonderful all-round players : indeed, there was talk at one time of arranging a match between them and the Graces, but, though the Forest folk were sufficiently enthusiastic, the meeting never took place. There were five of them—Tom, George, Edward, Harry and Sam. The last three all became professional cricketers and built up big reputations thirty or forty years ago, and two of them played for Hampshire. George Tate, who was the senior of the brothers, was a farmer at Pond Head, Beaulieu. He had a fascinating side line to farming as a breeder of butterflies, which he was in the habit of disposing of to entomologists, who probably knew a lot less about the subject than did Tate. All these brothers played in the Lyndhurst side against the Yorkshire eleven, and Dible, who was a professional on the

Hampshire Ground Staff at Southampton for many years, was one of their pupils.

Another " character " of that time was Tom Head, a corn-chandler, who invariably umpired these classic games and was in the habit of speaking his mind both on and off the field.

But the cricket of those days was different. It was, in this kind of cricket, at least, the heyday of the fast bowler. The " googly " was unknown in village cricket, and as the great Yorkshiremen did not practise the " googly " either, the Foresters were able to put up a pretty good show against them. But when a visiting side in which the despised lob bowling was valued came, they shook the Foresters rather badly.

CHAPTER XXV

FOREST INDUSTRIES

Forest Industries: Ancient and Modern—Wool and Silk Manufacture—The Salterns—Mills and Breweries—Christchurch as a great Arsenal—Agriculture.

THE industries of the Forest, both of ancient time and to-day, are very much more numerous than anybody would suppose, having regard to the fact that the area is but sparsely populated.

Some of the industries of old time have already been referred to, the shipbuilding at Buckler's Hard among them. The presence close at hand of a sufficiency of oak; the additional circumstance that the waterway was a well-protected one and that Portsmouth was not far away, explain why it was that Buckler's Hard was chosen for this work, though possibly the fortuitous circumstance that there was the nucleus of a yard there may have had something to do with it. The coming of the iron ship was one of the causes which put an end to Buckler's Hard as a shipbuilding centre, just as the increased demand for iron for this and other uses, and the need for it to be produced where it was wanted or thereabouts, destroyed another Forest industry carried on quite close at hand.

There were at one time quite considerable ironworks near Sowley, at the other end of the Beaulieu Manor lands. The ore which was smelted there was gathered from Hengistbury Head, which is all ironstone,

and sometimes from the cliffs at Hordle, closer to Sowley, which had the same characteristic. The furnaces were fed by charcoal, of which there was the raw material at hand, or by wood, and the great hammer at Sowley was a feature of the countryside of which aged people sometimes speak, though they cannot possibly remember it.

There was a saying at one time common in the lower Forest that if the Sowley hammer could be heard rain was at hand, but that would only be current in those parts north and east of Sowley. It was, like that other phrase, that rain from Woodfidley lasts all day, severely local in its application.

When the South of England mattered in industrial politics, the Forest fringes, if the centre has no industrial history, were all busy places. Naturally there was a considerable industry in wool-working, seeing that so much of it came into the country by way of Southampton. The ancients' great problem was that of transport, and as raw materials could not be carried very far profitably they had to be worked up as near home as possible. This may explain quite a lot of the tiny industries which used to exist in the small towns near the Forest, since no other theory seems to fit the case.

At Fordingbridge spun yarn was made in considerable quantity, and there were small manufactories of cloth and worsteds run on patriarchal lines there as well as at Winchester, Romsey, Basingstoke, Southampton, and Alresford. All of these, in addition to dealing with some of the imported wool which came in through Southampton, handled the product of the Hampshire Down flocks.

Silk manufacture, too, was not inconsiderable. There were as many as 200 looms at Romsey at one time, round about 130 years ago, and at one "silk throwing" mill at Winchester in 1807 one firm em-

ployed 300 hands. A sidelight on industrial conditions of that time is that the average weekly payment, for what was at least semi-skilled work, was 7*s*. Yet the records contain no reference to strikes or even industrial discontent, though no doubt many of the recipients of pay which hardly exceeded a penny an hour (for the eight-hour day did not exist any more than a union rate) were young people whose responsibilities did not press upon them any more severely than would be involved in a payment to the family exchequer.

At Fordingbridge, where the woollen mills were not the chief source of industrial prosperity, there was a big flax industry. At least two-thirds of the industrial population of the place were occupied either in growing flax or turning it to the uses of commerce, and the little town was almost famous up till quite recent times for the striped bedticking which was produced there.

Lymington was a place of an important industrial activity at one time. The spirit of rivalry towards Southampton was fostered by an overstressed local patriotism. Ships were built there, as they were at Southampton, and it was a port of consequence when all ships were of light draught. But its staple trade in the dead days was that of salt-producing. There is no single trace of it now, but at one time, at the end of the eighteenth century, as is recorded in " The Hampshire Gate " (H. G. Dent), Lymington's production of salt was second only to that of Liverpool. Before the salt-mines of Cheshire were discovered salt was commercially produced by evaporation from the marshes along the Solent and Southampton Water, and this was done not only at Lymington, but all along the coast and up the river as far as Totton. The salterns at Lymington were famous, and the site of some of the works is still retained among local

place-names. Salterns' Hill upon the Beaulieu estate was the place where the monks of the Beaulieu foundation "raised" their own salt.

But there were disabilities. Obviously salt could only be won during the summer months, whereas the salt-mines of Northwich and Droitwich were available all the year round, even though the cost of working might be heavier. Thus did the salt trade "go north" in the wake of shipbuilding and ore-smelting.

It was sufficiently big while it lasted to produce something like £50,000 a year in the way of taxation in respect of Lymington alone. Even when the Lymington salterns were shut down, the manufacture of salt by evaporation was continued at Hayling Island, in Langstone Harbour, where the physical conditions were somewhat the same.

Then there were all sorts of little industries which cannot be explained by the presence either of convenient raw material or the existence of a market near at hand. Flour-mills, of which there are several on the Forest outskirts, though none within the Forest, are, of course, required everywhere. The brewing trade was also extensive in the little towns and villages, Ringwood, Romsey and Eling among the number, very possibly because the water was suitable. This latter consideration would also explain, perhaps, the existence of paper-mills at Romsey, and the tannery at the same place, but there is no visible reason why watch-chains should have been produced, as they were, at Christchurch, or gloves at Ringwood, unless this latter is a relic of the days in which there was very considerable weaving practised all over the South.

The industrial characteristics of to-day are pretty much the same in the border towns as they have always been. Nearly all of them have small factories of one sort or the other producing the most dissimilar

things, and some of them feed not only a local but a national trade. Nearly all of them are family concerns, and most are flourishing exceedingly.

One of the biggest industries of the Forest area in modern times was that of powder manufacture, which was carried on at Eyeworth on the northern plain. Charcoal-burning was at one time the basis of the processes which went to the manufacture of gunpowder, and the fact that this was still being carried on within the Forest and that the raw material of the trade was available in abundance, may have been the determining consideration in establishing the factory at Eyeworth, as was done in the late 'sixties of the last century.

At that time black powder was the basis of nearly all propellent explosives ; and charcoal was the leading constituent of black gunpowder. But the remoteness of the whole district of which Eyeworth Lodge is the centre made it an ideal place for the carrying on of a dangerous trade. As smokeless powder came into more general use so the demand for the black variety declined, and it was with this change that the factory at Eyeworth began to assume significance.

It started in a very small way. In the early weeks the total output did not exceed ten pounds in weight, and the transport problem, when the manufacture of the weekly batch was complete, was a simple matter of a man and a wheelbarrow. Then the whole process of manufacture was carried on in three wooden huts.

But it was a business which eventually became a very big thing, employing a large number of men at Eyeworth and Redbridge, which is on the Forest-Southampton main road. The three wooden huts became seventy on the Eyeworth site alone ; the man and the wheelbarrow (the man, by the way, is still alive, or was in 1922) was displaced first by a horse

transport system which employed forty animals, and then a fleet of cars. The ten pounds per week became fifteen thousand pounds per week.

Charcoal did not go to the making of smokeless powder ; the basis of it was wood pulp, and for this purpose alder was chiefly used, and this was imported in prepared sheets from overseas. The pulp was first dried, and then treated with acids which changed the pulp into an explosive nitro-compound. The surplus acid was removed by washing, and the material was afterwards dried again and ground, the drying being carried out by hot air. By this time the compound was an explosive, and needed careful treatment in danger houses, with the most carefully devised safeguards, and it was there that the sifting, grading and packing took place.

The Company which carried out the process was the Schultz Gunpowder Company, the active head of which, during the whole of his working life as a highly skilful chemist, was Mr. R. W. S. Griffith, who was appointed to the managership in 1874 at the age of 22.

During the war explosive material for time fuses and the like was manufactured at Eyeworth, but since then the Schultz undertaking has become a part of the Nobel Combine and its operations have been transferred to Scotland, and the buildings at Eyeworth have been demolished.

Lymington was not the only place which cherished ambitions of a great commercial prosperity. Christchurch was once the centre of a grandiose scheme of harbour-making quoted by Mr. Hutchinson. The inventor and publicity agent of this great plan was Andrew Yarranton, and in a book which he wrote about it over 300 years ago, he explained that his scheme was based on the desire to dethrone the Dutch from the sea mastery which they then enjoyed. No modern company promoter ever penned a pros-

EYEWORTH RESERVOIR

pectus in more roseate colours, but his capacity to make others believe was not as great as his imagination was powerful.

What caused him to fix his mind on Christchurch as the place round about which could be fashioned a Southampton, a Portsmouth and an Aldershot all in one, is not clear at this time of day. He had not to think of providing great depth of water, which is the bugbear of present-day dock planning, and he found, or thought he had found, all the material for naval defence close at hand. The ironstone of the cliffs would serve, he imagined, for the fashioning of guns and armour; there was already in the Forest all the timber required for shipbuilding. A great arsenal was in his mind as well, and with fortifications and the auxiliary services, Christchurch was to become a vital place in Imperial defence.

The tragedy was that nobody in authority thought the plan practical, and Yarranton went to his grave convinced, as many a gifted man has been convinced since, that only the chicanery of politics and the resistance to change which those who are called to leadership always show, prevented his striking a blow for England which would be reverberating still.

Charcoal-burning is the oldest of all the Forest industries. It was practised, as we know, in Rufus' time, though the only record of it is the fact that the Forester who bore the body of the king to Winchester and burial, followed that trade. It is practised still in the Forest, though only, as far as I can trace, by one man. He is the very last. There may still be a demand for charcoal, but it is probably produced by a quicker plan than that used in the Forest, for there the method of manufacture has not changed substantially since Norman times.

This last lone "operator" of an almost forgotten trade plies it in the woods of the central Forest not

far from Minstead. He lives in camp during the burning season and alone, for it is a one-man job, though highly skilled. It is said that the process is a secret one and that the " recipe," if it may be called, passes from father to son.

Oak, elm and beech are chiefly used for charcoal-burning, the firs being too resinous. About fifteen tons of timber are used at each burning of the " heath," and it is in the building of it that great skill is required. When the timber baulks, split into convenient lengths, are laid, the pile resembles a kind of round mound, ashes, turf and rubbish being laid on top. Then the pile is beaten down, carefully but solidly, and bracken laid over. Holes are made to allow the smoke to escape and the " heath " is lighted. The burning is continuously watched, and water poured over the pile in order that the process shall not be hurried, for the slower the burning the greater the heat.

For four days it goes on, until at the end, if the work has been properly done and the building good and true, the pile is an incandescent mass. The cooling process is a long one too, and when the material is fit to handle the heath is opened and the charcoal bagged for commercial purposes. Since the days when charcoal was used for powder-making there is no local demand for it, though at one time, earlier still, it was extensively used for fuel.

Within the Forest area agriculture is practised naturally in the neighbourhood of the manors—general farming, with no special characteristic—but on the northern edge there is, as has already been shown, a measure of development in regard to small-holding which may be regarded as a model. Nearly all the farming, indeed, within the Forest area, except in the neighbourhood of the manors, is of this sort. The Forest has been said to have a definite small-holding

class, mostly commoners, who find that the raising of a little stock, and the growing of provender for the big towns which are not far away, can be done profitably on quite a little land.

Some of the small holders are only entitled to the adjective because the land they work intensively and so successfully is small in area. Many of them, in language which is well understood in the Forest, are "warm" men, owning a lot of cottage property in the villages—they believe in investing their savings where they can see the results—but working hard right up to old age, in order to save the cost of hiring. They are the hardy race, whose sons go to the Dominions in quite disconcerting numbers, there to practise on a previously unimagined scale, the farming they learnt on the tiny holdings at home.

Foresters are a type the recognition of whose value is soon won in the great western plains of Canada, for they can do anything. They know a lot about stock, especially of hardy stock; they have the woodland craft at their finger-ends; they know—many of them—how to keep the larder stocked, and nearly all of them love hard work. I know several small holders and farmers, who found in the days before co-operative buying and selling that their selling costs were too high in the Forest where the railway was of little use, and who have since gone to the Dominion. It was a wrench to them to leave the Forest, for a Forester born is a Forester till he dies, but every man I know who has gone across the sea has made good, turning his hands to lumber work when the ground was bone-hard, looking after the small profits, grabbing the returns quickly, and saving hard against the day when he can come back to the Forest, which is not unlike his own more spacious home, except in the matter of scale.

CHAPTER XXVI

PLACE-NAMES

The Upland and the Woodland Origins—The Fords—Battle of Charford—Legends—Squatting and Place-naming.

THE origin of many of the names of Forest places, whether they be villages or woods, have already been indicated: there are certain others which need to be mentioned because of their whimsical nature. Some, but not many, of the Forest names follow principles which are well understood. "Hurst" plainly indicates a wood: Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, Holdenhurst, are examples in or near the Forest; and Hurstbourne is another in the county not dissimilar at all events, at the time that it gained its name. "Holt," too, indicated the presence of trees or woodland, but I can only call to mind at the moment one example of this being used in a Forest name—Alderholt—though there are plenty in Hampshire, which was at one time Forest for the greater part of its area. Sparsholt is an outside case, and there is the better one still of Holt Forest, one of the remaining Crown Forests of the county. The suffix "ley" generally indicated a wooded pasture, or woodland on rising ground. There are several Ashleys in the county and one in the Forest which conform more or less closely to this rule.

But the "ley" ending as indicating an upland pasture will not always serve. There are a few Forest place-names which have that ending but quite another

significance. Netley Marsh and Netley Down (with neither a marsh nor even a bit of rising ground in sight) is a puzzle, until it is remembered that the whole area of the Forest was stated by the Saxon Chronicle to have been called Natanleag. The authorities do not agree as to the accuracy of the Chronicle, but Netley is a corruption of that name unquestionably, and applies just as much to the Netley which is on the Forest border as to the Netley on Southampton Water, opposite the eastern Forest shore. Nately in the north of the county and Natanbury near Downton have the same origin. The "Marsh," which complicates the Forest Netley, is in all likelihood but a corruption of St. Matthew.

Setley and Langley are explained by the "rising ground" hypothesis, but it will not do for Matley, where the great bog is, unless the bog was so named because it was near Matley.

Place-names ending in "dean" or "den" are not frequent in the Forest, but they are occasionally to be met with on its outskirts.

"Ashley," to go back to a name which shows at least the Saxon method of naming, did not necessarily indicate woodland in which that particular tree predominated: it was applied to any species, and no doubt the conditions under which woodland and meadow were associated explain the frequency with which this name is met with, not only in this part of the country, but more or less everywhere.

Many of the Forest names have their explanation in the general growth of the neighbourhood. Broomy is obvious, and so is Furzey Lawn, and there are a dozen others of the same sort which hardly require to be explained. Some have been the subject of close investigation where the meaning has not been clear. Thus Mark Ash has puzzled everybody. It is fairly clear that the name existed before that

particular wood was afforested—for there is a record of that happening in spite of the obvious age of some of the trees—and the best explanation which has been offered was that of Mr. T. W. Shore, a very learned authority on Hampshire antiquities, that it indicated a boundary mark of very ancient date.

The rivers do not in very numerous cases suggest place-names, though throughout Hampshire the name-ending " bourn " is quite common. The only Forest example is Rockbourne, which provides a puzzle as to how it came by the first part of its name.

But the fording places are frequently used in the building up of place-names. Thus Charford was Cerdic's ford ; and there is Tyrrel's ford (self-explanatory) and Kademannesforde, from which Cadnam got its name. Also there is Fordingbridge.

The battle of Charford, though inconclusive, was a vital affair in English history. It ended the long warfare in southern Wessex between the invading Saxon and the Britons, and it was preceded, as far as it is possible to decide between authorities which hold conflicting views about it, by a march across the Forest. Mr. A. F. Major in " Early Wars in Wessex " draws the inference from the writings of Bede, that the landing in 501 was that of Jutish legions, and, as has been shown, the discoveries in various parts of the Forest confirm this theory. Where the landing took place is in dispute. Some authorities suggest that it was at the mouth of the Itchen ; others the mouth of the Avon (which has a great deal of probability about it), while the view put forward by Wise was that Calshot Castle was the place.

In any case it was a long-drawn-out campaign, for the battle of Charford or Cerdicesford took place in A.D. 519.

Mr. Major holds that the Saxon objective in that battle was to cross the Avon in order to cut a road

which linked two important camps of the defending army. His view also is that the manœuvre was not completely successful; that the battle was a drawn one, and that stalemate followed.

Woodland names occur constantly: Bramble Hill and Thorny Hill suggest their character plainly, but why "Shave" Green and "Allum" Green, and what is the explanation of that thoroughly romantic name Mogshade?

Puckpits and Pixey's Cave have puzzled many. They are remnants of faery—the haunts in ancient legend of the sprites. Another legendary name, Bishops Crawl, is thus explained by Mr. Hutchinson, who quotes "good authority" for saying that "two high ecclesiastics found so great favour in the eyes of the King . . . that he granted to each as much land in the Forest as they could crawl round on hands and knees in twenty-four hours." The story bears some resemblance to that which lies behind the famous Tichborne Dole, which belongs to another part of Hampshire.

Beaulieu was stated by Rogers to be of Saxon origin—Beo-lea (Bee meadow); but the commoner explanation is that it is Norman French for a fair place, and in the charters it is described as "Bellus Locus Regis."

One place-name which the Forest shares with many other areas—Nomansland—has a Saxon explanation which is curious. Under the patriarchal Saxon system, land was granted to the heads of families and under certain conditions to all free men, and when that had been done, other land was set apart to communal use, being corporately held. Thereafter the rest of it was described as Nane Mannes Land—Nomansland. Village greens were generally of that character.

The whole subject of Forest place-names is very fascinating, but it is a game—the business of tracing them—in which there are no rules and very few

pointers. It is not impossible that some of the names in the southern area near the coast may have a Jutish origin, for in the early years of Forest story—before it became a forest at all—there was a considerable Jutish colony there, having come across from the Isle of Wight, which they had seized.

Many of the villages have names which are corruptions of those in Domesday. They may have been explicable then, but they are so no longer. The interesting and romantic names—of enclosures and landmarks rather than places of habitation—are purely fortuitous. They had to be named when they were planted in the one case, or for the convenience of those who made use of them in the other, and the fact that some characteristic occurred to a Forest official or some fancied resemblance to another place is quite often the explanation of a name otherwise meaningless. Woodfidley is a name which I have never been able to place. Lady Cross, too, sounds as if it must have a story of some sort, but it has not so far as I know. Ironshill, it may have been thought, was an ironstone formation like Hengistbury (which is self-explanatory), and Irons Well, which is on the northern plain, won its name because of the presence of an iron-impregnated spring which was much valued for its curative properties at one time. Deerleap, to mention a name which seizes upon the imagination, was a place where a hunted deer achieved a prodigious leap of eighteen feet.

Quite a number of these Forest names are not greatly in current use, however. Every wood and every enclosure has a name, and so have groups of trees in some cases, but Forest people do not ordinarily employ them. The hunting folk do, as they must in thinly populated country for clearness sake, and they appear on the map, but that is all. "Over Wilverley way" is the kind of general direction you get

A BEECH WOOD: NEAR MARK ASH

from the average Forester: that and a wave of the arm. "Up by Markway" is generic too. "Over Ipley" indicates, to a Forester, a whole stretch of territory, bog, barrow and woodland, stretching between the edge of the Forest at Dibden and Beaulieu road—which, by the way, everybody calls Beaulieu Rails. "Up by the Telegraph" in like manner stands for the whole of the tableland beyond Bramshaw.

It is quite possible that many people living in the Forest do not know the names of some of the enclosures. These mean very little to them now, for the old irritations on the subject of enclosure have all died down. They simply exist, many of them, as little bits of the Forest which are railed off from the rest. Ask the resident for the names of the near-by enclosures and he will only know where they begin and end if they have some outstanding characteristic like those at Mark Ash and Rhinefield.

There is another group of place-names which suggest association with particular people. Butts Ash is otherwise inexplicable. This sort of thing occurs quite frequently all over the Forest, and in many instances these may be of squatter origin. Brown, Jones or Robinson may in the remote past have "acquired" enough land for a dwelling at the edge of a wood, and Brown, Jones or Robinson's Corner may easily have been the way the place was described. It is all of a piece with the casual way the Foresters of old time attended to these matters.

But one may wander endlessly along this deviating if fascinating bypath, wondering and guessing at the oddities which constantly arise.

CHAPTER XXVII

FOLK-LORE

The Legend of Sir Bevis of Hampton—The Link with the Isle of Wight—The Pixie Legends—Treasures in the Barrows—Forest Superstitions—Healing Herbs—The Chidioke Monument at Christchurch—The Forest Songs—The Mummers.

THE tradition, folk-lore and folk-song of the Forest is not, except very occasionally, peculiar to itself. Every sharply defined area is so equipped, and it is to be expected that the physical characteristics and history of each informs its tradition.

It is as difficult here as anywhere else to clear the matted tangle of Forest tradition. Some degree of collection has been done of Forest folk-song, but not a great deal, because it is a long and troublesome task, and only inviting to one whose enthusiasm is very great. As the late Sir Laurence Gomme said, the best collecting is done by accident, and that implies unlimited leisure and equally the capacity to withstand disappointment.

One of the legends of the Forest, to deal with that aspect of the subject first, concerns the legendary knight, Sir Bevis of Hampton, of whom it was traditionally said (Wise quotes the legend) that he used to take his afternoon walk across the Solent from Lepe to the Island.

But that is a mere addition to a legend which belongs to Hampshire in the sense that that fabled giant is

supposed to have lived at Southampton, and, according to some writers, was buried there, but it is really one which belongs to the world. The story of Sir Bevis and his mighty feats of strength—he is supposed to have thrown his sword two miles from the top of Arundel Castle in Sussex—and his love for individual battle with the legendary knights, was told by wandering minstrels up and down Europe for generations after the Crusades. Every country has its Sir Bevis. His is one of the legends which was the common property of a world which had but a restricted literature and which sought to supply the lack by word-of-mouth stories in which battle and mighty physical strength naturally had a prominent part.

That casual crossing of the Solent by a knight on his afternoon strolls may very conceivably be linked with some other legends concerning the New Forest and the Island, which may have had a basis of fact. The geologists seem to agree that the Island was once joined to the mainland and that the Solent was a river which eventually reached the sea as the result of a break through. But at a much later date in history than this, when the Solent was a strait and the Wight a real island, there is a Forest tradition that there was a causeway across the Solent from Lepe to the Island shore and that the stone for the building of Beaulieu Abbey was transported in that way. I have also seen it stated that there was a causeway from Keyhaven to Bembridge, but there was probably no more than one—if there was one at all—and the plain facts of geography seem to discountenance the last theory, seeing that Keyhaven is opposite the western part of the Island and Bembridge is at the eastern end, though close to the quarries which were greatly used by the early builders of churches and monastic establishments.

The other Beaulieu legend concerning the dream of

King John and the endowment which was the material result of his contrition after nightmare has already been told, and so has the Christchurch legend of the Divine Workman, though that, too, is also familiar in many other parts of England.

The barrows are the subject of very numerous traditions. In ancient Forest story these barrows were supposed, many of them, to contain buried treasure. They do in sober fact, but these consist of memorials of the ancients, and the treasure-seekers are those who by careful digging, patient measurement and comparison have pieced together the evidence they have found. Among a people living close to natural things it was entirely to be expected that they would assume that the barrows contained treasure of a more mundane sort. And perhaps at one time they did.

The superstitions of the Forest are those very largely of the southern shires, adapted to local conditions.

But that does not prevent their being regarded as indigenous to the Forest. Until the railway came through the Forest (the people of Lyndhurst would not have it any nearer than three miles, by the way) the Forest was a self-contained community, rarely going outside its borders and preserving its traditions from generation to generation. There is still a large amount of oral superstition, and in the last generation there was very much more, for what the railway began the motor-car has completed, except that the process is infinitely more rapid. Still, there are a few old folk who still call those who come to the Forest occasionally, or who have not lived there for a decade, foreigners, and for that reason it is only very rarely that it is possible to pick up these fascinating odds and ends of folk-story, song, and superstition.

There are traditions of Forest remedies for all sorts of diseases, but that is a general weakness of the rural population everywhere, or was in the last

generation. There was an idea at one time in the Forest (Wise quotes it) that "lungs of oak" were of value in the cure of pulmonary diseases, and another lichen was supposed to be a panacea for eye trouble. There was a spring at Southampton at one time—I have often tried to trace it without success—which was supposed to have great virtue in cases of eye disease, and people came from considerable distances to test it. There was another in Southampton, even more famous, which was a specific for troubles of the scrofulous order, but that, too, has dried up or been led underground and forgotten. Naturally the herbs of the Forest were valued by the suffering, but it could not always be said that this was a superstition.

There was a theory that children afflicted with fits could be cured by passing through cloven ash trees; another that bread baked on Good Friday was curative of certain forms of suffering, and there was the very familiar superstition concerning the virtues of the seventh son of a seventh son.

Perhaps the most curious of these superstitious legends is that which assigns healing properties to the monument of Sir John Chidioke in Christchurch Priory. The figure, of alabaster, is not now defaced by those who attribute healing value to it, but at one time scraping for this purpose was more or less constant.

Although Forest folk used to employ a vast number of words in common speech which may be said to be peculiar to the district, culled in very numerous cases from the association of the people with the woodlands and the heaths, there is no characteristic Forest speech. It is broad, but only as the language of the Wiltshireman from the downland is broad. Moreover, it is less definite than it was, as a natural result of the spread of education, and rarely amounts to more, in these days, than a sort of softening of the vowels. For the same reason the old expressions are

disappearing. The hundreds which Wise collected and explained are only heard very occasionally in these days.

And so it is with the old folk-songs. They were rarely written down, and though older people recall snatches just remembered in their young days, one never hears them now. The only one which remains in anything like its original form was that which began :

> Eight hundred years ago, sir,
> As I have heard men say,
> A King rode through the Forest
> His royal stag to slay.
> Through brier and brake the huntsmen's horn
> Rang with a cheerful swell,
> But instead of a royal stag that day
> The King of England fell.

I have heard it said that the Mummers originated in Minstead. That cannot be true, because they were universal, as is their play, which is usually about St. George, though there are many variants. They still exist in the Forest as in other of the more remote villages of Hampshire, but they present the merest parody of the real thing, which was a sort of morality play with some pretension to beauty and some real significance. Where it remains it is a means whereby youth may wring from those a little better off such coin as is available at Christmas-time. It is little more now than a carol-singing business with no carols.

Still in some places they do follow, to some extent, the story of St. George and the Dragon, with old songs which have been handed down by word of mouth. There is always a battle, for that is worth while as a means of letting off steam if it has no other purpose, between St. George and the Turks (which suggests some association with the Crusades), and another feature is that the " King " brings to life, by some magical means, one of the leading characters who has fallen in

the fight. Where the Mummers present their play in the least pretentiously they add paper streamers of a painful modernity to black faces and decrepit tall hats, but the effect is very incongruous, if, perhaps, not unprofitable.

It is curious, by the way, that the old top-hat, an heirloom, often plays a part in the festivities of the people. Not in this day, possibly, except on the head of the painted clown, but a generation or two ago at the village fêtes, which before the days of organized friendly society work were the festivals of the sharing-out clubs in the villages, every man wore a top-hat—at least in one village, just outside the Forest and over the Wiltshire border. The fêtes in the Forest remain, organized by moderns, but there are traces here and there of the old ways which may not have been far removed from the festas of Italy, though they are more and more difficult to discover in these days when the mainstay of a fête is a roundabout with a voice like that of seven devils.

The change which education and the opening up the Forest, as the result of motor transport, has brought about has had other results. The old sporting customs as affecting the people who live on and close to the land have gone. Wrestling and cudgel-playing had continued up till a few years before Wise wandered so painstakingly about in the Forest in the 'fifties and 'sixties of the last century, but they are forgotten now. Hocktide games were played up till nearly that time, but so they were, and still are, in other parts of the country.

It may be that squirrel-hunting with the squoyle (corrupted from scale) still takes place, but it is only a memory to most people. Mr. Lascelles speaks of it as being general at one time, round about Christmas.

The squoyle, or squail, was a light stick, twelve or fifteen inches long, with a knob of heavier wood at the

end, and the snogg was a heavier and rather more deadly weapon with a lead weight at the top. Some of the hunters were deadly shots, fifty yards being not in the least uncommon.

"In fact," says Mr. Lascelles, "the squail is never out of the hand (or the pocket) of that class of the labouring population—too numerous by far—who can never be induced to put in a week's honest labour, and a good deal of 'stuff' other than squirrels fall to them by the skilful use of this weapon, as they spend their days loafing about the Forest."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MODERN FOREST

The Spirit of Change—Country Houses as Hotels—A Change that is only Surface Deep—Social Life.

THE Forest is definitely reacting to the spirit of change which is affecting rural England in every part in some measure, sometimes for the good and not infrequently in the reverse direction. It has been a slower, more methodical process in the Forest than in some parts of England, where special circumstances rather than an opening out were the originating causes.

I remember watching the spirit of change come over the villages and the people of Salisbury Plain, which in some respects, though not physically, is like the Forest, as the result of the purchase by the War Office of vast tracts of the downland for the purposes of military training. It was almost startling. Those villages, laid back from the main roads by some inspired village planner of the remote past, sleeping dreamily beside the pleasant chalk streams of that lovely county, changed in a couple of years or so, giving up the pursuits which had been those of earlier generations, large-scale farming and working on the land, for the business of ministering to those who came within their orbit for the purposes of training. The little shops became big ones ; the cottages went into business according to the degree of enterprise of those who lived in them ; the men-folk developed side-lines.

Everybody woke up, as it were, to a new view of things. The Lords of the Manor passed, and that is very often a tragedy in the village life of England, (though it sometimes results in the lifting of a dead hand), and a Government department—in that case the War Department—took its place. The ancient peace of the downland was disturbed not only by the constant movement of brown ants shaped like humans, but by the roar of guns and the hoisting of red flags. Progress about the countryside was no longer, for the people, a matter of slow-moving carriers' carts; there was a lengthening railway, and in time came the handy cheap cars, which initiated change in all the remote places of England. The whole process was almost breathless. It made the old people shake their heads, but the younger folk soon adapted themselves.

In the New Forest the spirit of change has not been like that. It has taken several generations. The railway began it, and, as has been already suggested, Mr. Lascelles thought that the æsthetic movement, which had the Exhibition of 1851 as its starting point, had something to do with it. Before that the Forest was a closed book to three-quarters of English people, and to be frank about it, the Foresters preferred that it should be so. The motor-car is carrying on the process very rapidly. The Forester now looks upon "visitors" just as does the dweller by the sea; he places them mentally, within inverted commas.

He didn't ask them to rush about the tarred roads laid out like velvet ribbons amidst the green, but since they have come, and are coming in greater numbers each spring and summer and autumn, they might as well, he thinks, be turned into profit.

Wherefore the Forester on a main road lays himself out to meet the material demands of the passing traveller, especially if these be for sustenance. The

scale may be quite modest, consisting of the word "Teas" with the "s" written backwards, and a trestle table in the garden, or it may comprise the turning of a country house into an hotel, where the empty stables have been transformed into a garage. Sometimes these are owned by the big hotel companies which cater especially for visitors who demand luxury with their Forest golf, and dancing as well as peaceful rusticity. Sometimes they have become gracious hotels in which the atmosphere of the country house is still preserved with the shady lawns, the tennis courts and the quiet hallways. But they all seem to be paying handsomely. Even the ancient village "pubs" are beginning to look after the needs of the "visitor" as well as those of the people to whom aforetime they have stood in the relation of clubs. Stucco facings are covering the worn old brick: the sign has often been repainted (less attractively than before); the tangled garden, where the pigs and the fowls had their habitation, has become a tea garden with pergolas and roses, and here and there you may see a little teashop which might easily have strayed out of Bond Street and set itself down in some ancient village. Even in the open Forest, not too far from a centre which is much used, there are tents, and little daintily laid tables, such as would be seen at a cricket week on a county ground.

The Forester does not notice these things; they have come so gradually in the wake of the yellow motor signs of the motor organizations, and the vast iron plate appeals of those who peddle petrol. Moreover, these manifestations of change are only to be seen on the main roads and close to the villages, where, by the way, there are even curiosity shops now—and good ones—just as there are at Brighton and Bournemouth. Out in the Forest the only indi-

cation is the circumstance that the road is a carpet and that the whine of cars can be heard in all but the most remote woods.

No man resents these things, and I don't know that many would change them if they had the power. For they have meant prosperity to many, and for the seeker after solitudes there is still nine-tenths of the undisturbed Forest for him to wander in.

To put it briefly, it is all rather superficial. There is less change deep down than in almost any part of England: no talk of the break-up of estates, except on the fringes; not many opportunities for the farmer to own his land where he has rented it before. The old manors are in nearly every case in the same hands as they have been for generations; "new" people in a residential sense are curiously few, except in about three villages, where new and small country houses have been built within the last few years.

Social life is very much what it was, except that it has the new range which the motor-car has given to it, and that it has a greater speed in other ways. There is the same subtle exclusiveness, not without its dignity, which everybody in the Forest understands but which cannot be explained in print; there are lines which nobody crosses; there are houses which are open to some and closed to others, just as they used to be. And political reasons govern these things just as they used, probably to a greater extent than anywhere in England. It is a curious and a fascinating kind of atmosphere, which makes the other manifestations of the new age seem very trivial and ephemeral. It is just part of the spirit of the Forest, and that is all that can be said about it.

CHAPTER XXIX

GIPSIES

Fewer in the Forest—At the Fairs—The Flowers of the Forest—"Brusher" Mills, the Forest Hermit.

IN a book of sketches of Forest life written many years ago by Philip Klitz, I remember reading a story—it was one of the favourite stories of childhood—about a doctor who was knocked up late on a winter night of exceptional storm, by a dark man on a Forest pony, who asked with urgency that the doctor should accompany him to the bedside of his wife who was very seriously ill. The doctor required some persuasion, for his own house was a lonely one, and members of his family were not anxious to be left alone on such a night. But his natural professional instincts overcame his inclination, though it is possible that the quite unexpected eloquence of the stranger, who had a soft and attractive voice and a notable command of language, which was in strange contradiction to his unkempt appearance, may have had an influence too. In any case the doctor went, following the man on the pony, into the very heart of the Forest, across streams and moorland, and beneath the dripping trees. He did not know in the very least whither he was being led, and his quite natural misgivings were not lessened when, coming to a stream, he was invited to make the crossing on the broad back of the man who had summoned him. However, he went on with his task, and came presently to a couple of tents of excellent size

and fitting, in one of which lay a woman very seriously ill. A couple of hours he spent there until a child was born, being invited thereafter into the other tent to a supper of the choicest foods and excellent wines, laid on a shining table lit by candles in beautiful candelabra. Then a fee, greatly in excess of that which he usually received under such circumstances, was pressed upon him, and the offer made by a very grateful tent-dweller not only to carry him across the stream again, but to escort him to his own house.

The man was a gipsy.

Whether that story was true, based partly upon fact, or was entirely quite excellent fiction, I have never had the opportunity of determining.

It would be certainly unlike anything to be found in the Forest to-day, though gipsies are still to be met there in somewhat reduced numbers, for it seems to be the general view that the Romanys are dying out in England, or are being absorbed into the population by slow degrees. The war may or may not have hastened the process, but it certainly seems to be happening, unless it is that the tribes are spreading their activities to a greater extent than they used to do. They are great travellers, and only a few families of them would call the Forest their home, though they make, perhaps, longer stays there than in most places.

They may still be seen at some of the old fairs, for they are not averse, when the opportunity serves, to a little horse-dealing, but it would be a mistake to assume that the purveyors of entertainment on these occasions, are gipsies, in spite of their love of much gaudy equipment, and a fondness for many-coloured shawls and bright beadwork. It is not unlikely that there is gipsy blood in their veins, and the enthusiasm with which they take the road each spring, after a winter in the towns, is an evidence of it.

The real gipsies still live in caravans, brightly

painted and sometimes luxuriously fitted, or, if they lack the wealth to make this provision, in little low tents pitched close to the furze and scrub for protection against the winds. They do not seek the deep Forest either in summer or winter, and generally maintain their little settlements close to the villages. Theoretically they are supposed to shift camp quite frequently, every twenty-four hours was the law at one time, but it is not an observance about which anybody is very strict in these days. There are some families of gipsies who prefer not to winter in the Forest at all, but take themselves and their belongings to a site which the tribe has purchased rather outside the Forest, near Fordingbridge. Even so, they do not make it in any sense a permanent camp : they do not understand housing, and do not apparently want to, for the caravans and the tents are in use there too.

The old trades are still pursued, though mass production of wirework and tinware has rather spoiled the market in some of the details of their merchandise. They still make pegs with the old neatness, and their basket-work, from the Forest rushes, is still valued because it is always strong if not beautiful. It is not unlikely that they sometimes take toll of the rabbits of the Forest, but it would be libellous to say that they make a profession of poaching. There would be a very small market for rabbits offered for sale by gipsies either in the villages or the towns, and as they are always sound business men, they do not waste their time in seeking out the occasional purchaser who will not ask questions.

The competition in those mechanical arts at which they formerly excelled has driven them more and more into the business of flower-selling in the big towns near at hand. All the year round they practise it : in spring with the daffodils, and later with the heather, and later still with hollies and mistletoe.

It is just possible that the daffodils come by way of Covent Garden from the Scillies, but they are generally to be purchased quite early in the morning from brisk women, copper-hued in complexion, coated and skirted with an apron over the skirt, and that which might once have been called a picture hat—retaining at least a patch of ostrich feather. They may have bought the flowers from the wholesalers who handle this difficult trade, but it is a fact that there is a notice on some of the country estates that flower-pickers, and those in search of daffodils particularly, will, if they are caught, be called upon to answer to the magistrates. The notices would never have been painted if spring gardens were inviolate.

There is at least no mystery about the heather. That comes from the Forest without a doubt and commands a fairly ready sale in the towns. So with the Christmas decorations, and the young firs which pass for Christmas trees among those who know no better. Nobody bothers to inquire concerning the vendor's title to these things, but it is probable that the firs came from the Forest, and it is certain that the holly does. It is forbidden to take these things because the hollyat least is sold officially at the proper season, but a prohibition, however sternly couched, is not of itself sufficient to turn a gipsy from doing that which he has always done.

The Forest gipsy takes the same view as the Forester of a long-forgotten day—that the good things of the woods exist for the benefit of those who dwell within them, if they have the skill to take them without being seen and to dispose of them out of the sight and hearing of those who have the right to ask questions.

Generally speaking, the gipsies keep themselves very much to themselves. There is no association between them and the village people, but it is possible that an explanation for this is the habit of the villagers of blaming the "gippos," as they call them, for their

GIPSIES ON TREK: NEAR NEW PARK

losses of chicken, and for unwonted bare spaces in their allotments. It may very well be that the chicken have gone to feed the foxes, and that an explanation of the depredations on the allotments might be sought with advantage nearer home.

In spite of this habit of some of the Foresters to regard the gipsies as the cause of a good many of the trivial disabilities and inconveniences from which they suffer, the Romanys do not, to be entirely frank about it, matter a great deal in the economy of the Forest. There are not enough of them, and they are beyond doubt diminishing. Even sixty years ago this was so in fact, though many people thought otherwise.

"Many people," said Wise, "have a vague notion that the gipsies constitute the most important element in the population of the New Forest, whereas, of course, they are mere cyphers. . . . Here and there still linger a few in whose veins run Indian blood, against whom Henry VIII made bad laws, and Skelton worse rhymes. The principal tribes round Lyndhurst are the Stanleys, the Lees and the Burtons, and near Fordingbridge the Snells."

They have, as he points out, nothing whatever to do with the soil.

The hermits of the Forest—all famous woodlands have such—have been very few; there is but one known to a more than local fame. He was not a gipsy. His name was "Brusher" Mills—or "Brusher," as every Forester for two generations called him—and he was a real native Forester. How he came by his name people do not agree. I have heard it said that he earned it by his enthusiasm for sweeping the wicket of the Lyndhurst Cricket Club in his youth, before he preferred the creeping things of the Forest as associates to men, and that may be the right explanation. It has been said also that the name merely bore reference to his bushy beard, but that is scarcely sufficient. All Foresters in the days

when his hermit-like ways were beginning to attract notice, wore beards ; ninety per cent., anyway. The absence of a beard might result in the general use of a nickname in those days, but the possession of one never.

Brusher Mills was the son of a Forester who was in the service of a resident, and the Forest instincts were in his blood. He was a little difficult in his youth by reason of an exaggerated independence of character which remained with him all his days and was the underlying reason for the loneliness which he chose. One of his brothers was apprenticed to a baker, but, an outdoor life being a necessity to him because of asthma, he became a dairyman, and earned a more than local fame in the care of animals. Everybody used to call him in when stock was sick, and a " vet.," sent for by the employer of Brusher's brother in special circumstances, remarked that the dairyman knew as much about these things as he did.

The instincts were there, you see. What caused Brusher Mills to flee from the haunts of men has never been known. He is supposed to have said in his youth, because of a family row, apparently, that he would never live in an ordinary house again, and it was then that he took up his quarters in an old charcoal-burner's hut near Queen's Bower, on the road between Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst. I have asked many people if they knew what sent Brusher out into the wilderness, and the usual answer was that it was " just a kink."

But I believe the explanation lay deeper than that. However, he always kept silence on these points, though he was not morose, and was often to be seen in Lyndhurst village, dressed " anyhow," of course, as befitted a hermit, and hung about with tins in which snakes were supposed to be living. I only saw him once in my youth, but for twenty years before that he

looked the same. The life of the deep Forest seemed to agree with him ; for he was not an unhappy man. There was a picture post-card of him in circulation a few years ago which probably had as large a circulation as the post-card of Rufus Stone. In it Brusher was seen with his armour of tins and the forked stick which was his sword, scowling horribly at some children. The truth about that picture was that Brusher looked fearsome to order, the photographer having an eye for a picture, but no regard for the reputation of the hermit as a kindly old man whose only enemies were the creeping things of the Forest.

With authority he was always on good terms. Crown officers closed their eyes to the fact that Brusher was a squatter, and he never presumed on that little trifle of official kindliness. It was said of him that he not only left the game alone, but that if he found a bird he would take it to King's House. I have heard that he would not cut a stick without first getting permission from a keeper, but that is perhaps a touch of picturesque exaggeration.

At all events the keepers valued his supreme woodcraft, and always found him willing to help. The snakes he caught were used at one time as food for those members of the tribe at the Zoo which eat their own kind, and there was a small but regular demand for Forest snakes for scientific purposes which Brusher satisfied, as well as a market for the skins which he knew about. Beyond this he had a recipe for an ointment made from the adder which was in the nature of a vaccine, and had other virtues as well.

He managed to get a sufficient living out of his queer trades. He earned as much certainly as the average farm hand in the more spacious days of the nineties of the last century ; sufficient, likely enough, to have exchanged the charcoal-burner's hut and its patent discomforts for a cottage, but his life in the wood

satisfied him and lent him a certain dignity. He had self-respect too. He kept a change of clothing at the house of a relative near Lyndhurst, and was a regular visitor there for the purposes of baths.

What captivated the imagination of most people who visited the Forest was the faint touch of the Orient which seemed to hang about the trade he drove if not the man. Foresters took him as a matter of course. He was, as it were, part of the furniture, but the visitor always jumped, without help, to the conclusion that Brusher was a snake-charmer, and that mystic rites were practised at night within the charcoal-burner's hut at Queen's Bower.

But he didn't charm snakes; he just caught them if there was a market for them, or killed them first if they were more serviceable dead. He helped to make the Forest safe, but he did not do it from an altruistic motive.

When old age came upon him authority became aware of his existence, and suggested to him that he should spend the evening of his days after a more civilized fashion—in a word, that he should live where somebody could look after him. Of course he refused, and then, from the kindliest intent, it was decided that the hut should be removed. He submitted at last, but not happily. He did not live very long afterwards, his death taking place at Brockenhurst, in the open, as he would have desired it.

There was at least one other Forest hermit, but he has been dead for many years. He lived, as did Brusher Mills, in a hut, in the woods near Denny, and it is a local tradition, almost forgotten, that his voice still rings through the woods he loved, though the whisper of the wind in the trees is the likelier explanation.

CHAPTER XXX

THE FOREST IN WAR

THE Forest has generally had a place in the war-story of this realm. Once it was a battle-ground, but that was before recorded history began. It has since made contributions of men or material on a scale which has sometimes been startling, having regard to the apparent limitations of its opportunity, and many times in our history has it been a training-place of the armies.

There have been times in our war history when it has been thought likely that it would be the scene of invasion, as it was from Calshot to Hengistbury Head in the dawn of history, and always on these occasions it has made its general response of fighting men, whether for the trained bands of the Middle Ages, when the armies of the realm had a sort of militia basis, or until the call of ten years ago.

In this latter respect the response of the Foresters was as that of the whole nation, as the war crosses by the roadside in every Forest village shows. But the Forest was used, every corner of it, for some war purpose or other. There was no need for its oak for naval purposes as in the middle years, but very heavy toll indeed was made upon the woodlands for the multifarious purposes of a trench war. The firs were used very largely for the purpose of trench supports, and there was an elaborate and highly efficient organization to meet this and our other needs. We could not

at the moment import timber because of the demand for ships' bottoms for other purposes. It was in circumstances such as these that the Forest made contributions of pit props on a considerable scale.

The camps set up in this way were very like the lumber camps of the Far West, except in scale. There were the clearings, the mechanical equipment, the hum of the great steam-saws beneath the trees at Setthorns, and the rumble of the timber carriages, heard long years before in those quiet aisles but never in such circumstances of stress as at this time.

At one time there was a large force of Portuguese lumber-men encamped there, this being a little known part of the war effort of that allied nation to supplement the diminished number of skilled woodmen who could be spared. There were Canadian lumber-crews too, and some Irish. In all some 40 woods were laid under contribution.

Apart from this the Forest was used for all the varied purposes of training. Calshot, which in the middle years, and right up till the war, was an important unit of the Southern coast defences, mounting big guns and having a more or less permanent garrison, became an air station, a vital centre of the new arm, a character which it still retains indeed. Inland a little, on the great Beaulieu Heath, there was another huge concentration place of the Air Services, valuable because it was so remote and so easily protected from the observation of enemies. At Boldrewood or thereabouts, there was another great camp, only now being hidden beneath the kindly mantle of the lower growth, and at Lyndhurst there was a bombing school, which made greatly for efficiency in those days in which precision and promptitude in the handling of bombs mattered a very great deal.

Then nearer Romsey were the great remount camps, wonderful places these, the point of concentration of

RIVER SCENE NEAR BROCKENHURST

all the animals required for the purposes of the war. Very frequently, too, the Forest was used for the general purpose of concentrating the armies, and putting the final touches of effective organization to divisions which had to be gathered together in great haste. The famous 8th Division went into the very special hell which was the baptism of that very famous unit, straight from the bivouac at Lyndhurst, and thence by road to Southampton and the Flanders plain ; and in the northern Forest, the Test Valley, and the whole of the triangle formed by Romsey, Southampton and Winchester, the great bulk of the American armies was gathered before being sent across the narrow seas.

Then at Brockenhurst there was the great central Hospital of the New Zealand Forces, a wonderful piece of organization, one of the very best of the hurriedly assembled hospital systems of that time, and at Eyeworth, where there had before that time been a manufactory of powder for sporting guns, use was made of the technical skill of the chemists and operatives in the making of propellants for use in the shells.

Having regard to its population, the war effort of the Forest area was a really wonderful thing. The marks are still there in the shape of concrete foundations, great gaps in the woodlands, traces of huts, military roads, and rents and holes where the bombing school practised its noisy art. But the scars are being healed. The kindly Forest is beginning to cover them : the scrub cannot make a great deal of the concrete, but the trenches are filling up, and there are at least the beginnings of the new woodlands.

CHAPTER XXXI

FOREST FAUNA AND FLORA

The Birds—And Insects—The Flowers and the Fungi.

THE story of the flying life of the Forest, the flora, the lepidoptera and the fungi are specialisms which cannot be dealt with, except in the barest outline, in such a record as this. But they must be referred to if only for the purpose of indicating to those who take a more than casual interest in these things, where definite information may be sought.

Wise, for instance, gives a list of birds resident in the Forest (which is the way he puts it), which contains 72 names, and in addition there are the very numerous visitors, annual in character, and some of double passage, apart from those which may be properly described as stragglers. This authority quotes Yarrell's " List of British Birds," which shows that out of 140 which are described as residents, 72 are regularly found in the Forest ; out of 63 summer visitors to these realms, half of them come to the Forest according to the observations of those who year in and year out study these things ; also a quite large proportion of winter visitors, stragglers and occasional visitors. The result is that out of 354 birds known to our observers 230 may be described as Forest birds.

Mr. Howard Saunders' estimate, dated thirty years

or so later, puts the total of British birds at 384, and assigns 283 to the New Forest.

That list is not a modern one and there may be some variations in it, especially in regard to the birds of prey, which are diminishing everywhere in these islands, but a modern observer, the late Rev. J. E. Kelsall, has said in the chapter on the birds which he wrote for Rogers' book, that the list which Wise made was one of the best.

The eagles seem to have disappeared. They were there in Gilpin's time, for he mentioned a pair which were for several years to be seen in King's Wood, and two were killed near Christchurch many years earlier. Those particular specimens were not casual visitors, for in the shooting records of the second Earl of Malmesbury, which have already been referred to, it is mentioned that one of these had wrought great destruction among the wild-fowl and even among the hares. These must have been monsters, for the record shows that when one settled on an oak to shake its feathers even the tree shook. It was a sea eagle, and a youngster, only two years old, but it weighed nine pounds, and had a breadth of 6 feet 6 inches, and a length of 3 feet 1 inch.

The Eagle Tree in the Forest is so named because it was upon a branch of it that an eagle—a sea eagle in that case too—was shot by a Forest keeper, but that was about a hundred years ago.

Wise never saw an eagle in the Forest, though he mentions that he spent six months about the cliffs looking for one day by day.

The hawks are getting rare too, and nothing has been heard lately of the honey buzzard, but in Wise's time specimens were to be found regularly in the Forest, attracted by the beechwoods.

"At Mark Ash and Puckpits," says Wise, "I have frequently, for an hour together, watched a couple sailing with

their wings outspread, allowing the wind on a boisterous day to catch them till it almost veered them over, just circling round the beeches and sometimes tumbling like pigeons."

In all the beechwoods they might have been found at that time, and sometimes in the oaks at Sloden and elsewhere. There is one record of a pair nesting in a fir, but they generally chose the tallest of the beeches and frequently built right at the top.

The common buzzard, sometimes called an eagle because of its habit of flying at a great height, is disappearing too, if it has not already gone.

The owls are more numerous, some of them visitors, and some residents as it were. They may be heard in any part of the Forest, sometimes close to the villages. The tawny owl is the commonest, but specimens of the long and short eared owls may be found, though the latter is apparently a winter visitor. Amberwood used to be one of their favourite breeding grounds.

Woodcock and snipe are less uncommon, but the herons and others of their tribe are not as numerous as they were. The heronry at Vinney Ridge use to be one of the show-places of the Forest. In Wise's time they had but lately established themselves in considerable numbers.

"You can scarcely go along a stream side," he said, "without surprising some one or two, which, as you approach, flap their large slate-coloured wings and fly off with a rolling, heavy motion, circling in the air as they go."

Apparently they had not a very quiet life even in those calmer Forest days. Old Burley Wood was their first breeding-place; then Woodfidley; afterwards Denny Wood, and lastly Vinney Ridge. In 1861 there were at least fifty pairs of them in the beeches of that wood.

Mr. Kelsall noted that they were decreasing at Vinney Ridge, but added that there were many pairs

nesting near Sowley Pond, the late Lord Montagu having counted nearly forty pairs.

Most of the rarer birds of the Forest, and more particularly of the borderland, are to be found in the museum which the second Earl of Malmesbury set up at Heron Court, or rather of which he laid the foundation—for other members of his family followed his admirable example in this respect—gathering together a collection which is one of the most notable in the country. "Lord Malmesbury's collection," wrote the fifth Earl in the book which records his ancestor's "Half a Century of Sport in Hampshire"—

"are homely in their interest . . . the attraction of the Heron Court birds is in their local origin. . . . There has long been a more valuable and complete collection of local birds in the neighbourhood, Mr. Hart's museum at Christchurch having attracted thousands of admiring visitors from all parts of the country."

Of the smaller birds of the Forest there are complete lists in Yarrell's "British Birds," the detailed record of Wise, and the writings of Mr. Kelsall and others, but the ornithologist knows that already. This is not a book, in this respect at least, for the nature-lover who would seek knowledge of the flying fauna, but rather for those who, having no knowledge of the glory of the Forest in this and in so many other directions, need to have the Forest presented to them more or less as a whole. In this new age that public is growing larger every day, but it will be worth while repeating the advice which has been put forward so many times by the true bird-lovers, that the way in which the rarer Forest birds may be saved is by leaving them alone. Wise was, it is true, thinking more of the birds of prey when he spoke of the fact that any large bird brought out every raffish gun in the countryside, but he saw also the need for conservation of the rest, for he added :

"With some honourable exceptions I know of no one so greedy as the true ornithologist. The botanist does not uproot every flower he discovers, but—for he loves them too well—carefully spares some plants to grow and increase, whilst few ornithologists rest content till they see a specimen safe in their cabinets."

Mr. Kelsall points the moral too. "The public," he says, "are welcome to study them with the best of all weapons, the field-glass and the camera, but the keepers do their utmost to preserve from molestation all rare birds, their nests and their eggs." That the authorities are in earnest on this point is shown by the statement of Mr. Lascelles, quoted by Mr. Kelsall: "If anyone is found with eggs they are well assured that the keepers will be supported, even if the precise letter of the Birds' Protection Act does not warrant a conviction." And that policy prevails still.

I have a recollection of the visit to the New Forest of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt and of his vast enthusiasm for the birds therein. He had been talking about them in his large-hearted way on one of his last visits to this country—I am not sure that it was not actually the last—and it was arranged that his tour should end in the Forest before he embarked for home at Southampton. His pilgrimage was historic and, as was not uncommon, was talked about a good deal in advance, with the result that when the Colonel started for his lone ramble with Lord Grey of Fallodon, who is not a Forester by right, but the best possible cicerone that could have been secured, there was a train of newspaper correspondents with him.

He soon lost them when he got out of the train at Salisbury, I believe, and thereafter the two disappeared in the Forest alone, and did not reappear for nine hours or so. I can remember still the vociferous enthusiasms of the ex-President when he reached Southampton. "It was the day of my life," he said.

In the case of the insects of the Forest, the proportion of those peculiar to these islands which may be found within the Forest is even higher than in the case of the bird-life. Indeed, there are some examples local to the Forest which are not found anywhere else in the country. The mere list of the lepidoptera of the Forest contains many hundreds of names of butterflies and moths and insects which the ordinary person has never heard of. To recite this, or even to indicate the classes, would be a perfectly useless task.

There was one clever Forester who made quite a business of breeding butterflies for the market which always exists, and years ago a good many of those who were to be seen chasing optimistically across the heather were less interested scientifically in the results of their bags than they were in the rewards which would come to them at their sale.

The central Forest is the happiest hunting ground of the entomologist, whether he be a professional or merely a young enthusiast who has been bitten with the craze. In most of the woods around Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst the best treasures may be found. There, if at all in these days, may be seen the Purple Emperor, which grows to a larger size in the Forest than in most places ; the White Admiral, and the New Forest Burnet. Mr. J. Gerrard, of Lyndhurst, who has already been mentioned, had better luck or better craftsmanship in the matter of collecting the rarities than most, and it stands to his credit that he took Nioba, a black and brown fritillary which had never before been taken in England. Other rare examples are the Crimson Underwing and the Hawk Moth. Another great rarity, first found thirty or forty years ago in the Forest, is the Cicada fly, a tiny insect with a thrilling hiss. Its discovery caused a great stir at the time because of the general impression in scientific circles that it was a hot-weather insect ; but proof came

later. The names of Mr. Farren and Mr. Tait are still honoured among the experts for their discovery of this little creature, which, to the ordinary and perhaps unsympathetic eye, is rather like any ordinary fly of rather more than normal size.

It is not, however, by its size you shall know it. This particular breed may be a rarity, but the same is not true of the little "beastie" which everybody in the Forest calls by the generic name of forest fly; the other name of which is the bullock fly. Gilpin knew all about it, and described it in detail, with its bright brown coat, its sidling motion and its strong legs. He knew also that it was uncommonly difficult to kill, obviously because he had tried a good many times. The forest fly does not bite, apparently; it just crawls, and makes the Forest a place of the most exquisite misery for many strangers who are susceptible to irritation, as the result of its everlasting and aimless peregrinations. Gilpin was not a great entomologist, apparently, for he has very little to say about the insects: always was he looking out for the effective scene, and the wild life of the Forest only concerned him in so far as it contributed to the making of a picture. But even he had tried to be reasonably fair to the forest fly.

Wise was no entomologist either—he admits as much—and he had nothing to say about it. It is hardly probable that one who loved the Forest so well could have been unconscious of it, unless he was immune. That is the happy case of quite a number of people, otherwise undeserving. I am one of them. The forest fly always leaves me alone.

The ants and the beetles are there too, in every part of the Forest. Never have I seen such stag-beetles; never such ant-heaps. I came across one not so long ago in the Rhinefield Drive, a mighty thing for this country, a heaving mass of life, carrying on its func-

tions with military precision, contemptuous perhaps of the moving monsters who were, because they couldn't help it, seeing that the ground was black with ants, wiping out their species by the thousand.

The bees belong to a different category. Their humming fills the air in late summer and early autumn, as they search the miles of gently waving heather. Every Forester keeps them, because he knows that the heather honey is the best there is. And he would scorn to call the bee an insect : it is a friend.

The flowers of the Forest, the plants and the fungi, are specialisms too. Some of the chief treasures are found upon the coast-line, especially where the sea and the land meet gently by the marshland, but the remote Forest holds them too, and all about the bogs are the rare fungi. The Forest shore of Southampton Water is a happy hunting ground for plant treasures too ; the Beaulieu river estuary is another, as well as the flats around Lymington.

Within the Forest the ferns are chiefly noticeable, but the mere list of them would be too formidable to quote here. There were in Wise's day seventeen species of fern, including the six-foot royal fern which is chiefly found in the western Forest and over its border towards Fordingbridge. The lady fern is found very generally, and in clumps in the damp banks are the beautiful heart's tongue. The bracken, which makes for beauty everywhere, belongs to the same family.

Of the small flowering plants there are treasures everywhere, the spearworts and lungworts, the gladioli, the sorrel, the foxgloves, which fill the deep woods with a purple gleam, the bluebells, which carpet the glades with misty blue in late spring, providing a scene of entrancing beauty, and the stars of the primroses in the banks, with the wood violet generally close at hand.

These are but names to most people—except, of course, these last familiar friends of our youth—and the same remark applies to the treasures of the bogs, all with long names and characteristics only known to the elect. There are bands of naturalists in all the towns about the Forest who spend days on forays for the edible and non-edible fungi, taking a delight in spreading out their finds at eventide for the greater among them to place and name.

It is one of our national treasures, this little bit of England, so colourful, so rich in its memorials of every age, from that in which the foundations of this realm were laid, through centuries of exclusiveness almost of forgetfulness of its joys, till now, when it is being discovered again, in the age of machinery, for many thousands to whom aforetime it was but a place on the map with a name which seemed to be anachronistic. This change, which has come with mechanical transport, has broken down the old exclusiveness. Those who dwell within its ancient limits no longer speak of those without as foreigners. They have received the rest of us into their company. We are all Forest-lovers now.

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